Hafa Adai!

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you intend to celebrate Valentine's Day this year?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

School Attack

A former student walked onto the stage of a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University and opened fire on a packed science class, killing 5 students and wounding 16.

NATION...Page 10

State of Emergency

Chad's president declared a nationwide state of emergency Thursday, telling citizens that tightened controls are needed to restore order after recent rebel attacks.

WORLD...Page 11

Assassination Plot

Officials divulged alleged plots to assassinate Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and bomb foreign embassies.

MAHARLIKA...Page 12

AP

Rosa McGee, 104, sits in her daughter's Chicago apartment with her Bible, Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008.

Reaching 100 is easier than suspected

CHICAGO (AP)—Living to 100 is easier than you might think. Surprising new research suggests that even people who develop heart disease or diabetes late in life have a decent shot at reaching the century mark.

See REACHING on Page 4

Juvenile detention at risk due to budget cut

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

A drastic cut in the Department of Community & Cultural Affairs FY 2008 budget may force it to close down the Kagman Juvenile Detention Facility.

Melvin L.O. Faisao, the department's deputy secretary, told the House Ways & Means Committee that the facility would have to close down if the budget for Division of Youth & Services personnel and "all others account" is cut.

"The facility has to be in full compliance with the consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice at all times," Faisao said.

See JUVENILE on Page 4

CUC: Water meter installation nearly complete

About 85 percent of Saipan customers now have water meters, according to the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation.

CUC executive director Anthony Guerrero said the meter installation is expected to be completed in a few months.

He added that manufacturing problems encountered with the first batch of meters installed have been addressed. The Water Task Force has replaced meters with ones that have better readers and dials.

"We are 10 to 15 percent away from metering all of our water account. We expect the meter installation to help to

See CUC on Page 4

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

FANTASTIC SHOW

Friends of the Arts brings to Saipan the world's longest running musical, The Fantasticks. The musical had its initial run on Thursday, Valentine's Day. It will have a final performance on Sunday night at Charley's Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club. The performances include a buffet dinner. The cast is composed of Sam Conner, Joan Ashley Liwanag, Leo Goode, Jr., Paul Dujua, Chuck Sayon, Tommy Baik, Joseph Lloyd, and Harold Easton.

Local

'Drowning victim already inert when retrieved'

The 38-year-old man who drowned after he tried to retrieve his catch from the ocean while fishing Thursday morning was already motionless when rescue divers spotted him underwater.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said yesterday that the body of Roberto R. Raquepo (not Raqueto as police earlier reported) was seen by two rescue divers underwater near the cliff line of Coral Ocean Point in Koblerville.

Ogumoro said the rescuers brought the motionless Raquepo, a Filipino, onto the rescue boat.

Ogumoro said the rescuers tried to revive the victim on the way back to Sugar Dock where an ambulance then transported him to the Commonwealth Health Center.

A CHC doctor pronounced the victim dead on arrival at 11:15pm.

Police preliminary investigation showed that on Thursday at 9am, Raquepo went fishing near the COP cliff line. His fishing line broke as he was reeling in his catch. Witnesses said the victim climbed down the rocks and dove into the water.

As Raquepo started swimming toward the fish, he got submerged.

Ogumoro said it was at 9:46am when DPS received a call about the incident.

Ogumoro said officers from DPS Boating Safety, Dive Rescue Team, and Patrol Unit, and Fire Division's Search and Rescue Unit responded to the scene.

The police rescue unit, *Zodiac III*, was launched at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Upon the harbor patrol's arrival at the scene, two rescue divers immediately searched for the victim. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

'Old prison site not ideal for animal shelter'

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela maintains that the most appropriate site for an animal shelter is in Kagman and not the old prison facility in Susupe, as suggested by a PAWS official.

Tudela said he was told that the old Department of Corrections building north of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles will be demolished, as agreed by the CNMI and the federal Justice Department, upon completion of the new DOC facility.

The old DOC site, Tudela said, belongs to the Public School System and that he thinks that PSS has plans for it in the future.

According to a recent article, there have been no plans yet for the old prison facility once all the inmates and detainees are transferred to the new prison.

Pet Assistance and Welfare Services president Katie Busenkell had suggested the idea of using the old prison facility as a temporary or permanent animal shelter.

Tudela, however, said that another concern he has with the establishment of an animal shelter next to Marianas High School is the "nuisance caused by dogs and that it may pose a health hazard to the school."

The mayor's office was allotted $75,000 for the construction of the animal shelter in Kagman.

In an earlier interview, he said that his staff will construct the animal shelter as the bidding for the project has been cancelled to due to insufficient funding.

Tudela said that since 1985, an animal shelter should have already been established. The animal shelter is long overdue, according to Tudela, and he wants to finish the project "before I leave this office in 2010."

SHIFT MANAGEMENT CLASS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joe Ayuyu, owner of the local McDonald's franchise, announced that McDonald's recently conducted a two-day Basic Shift Management Class at its training facility at the Chalan Pale Arnold Road branch. Those in attendance received a Certificate of Completion from John Bninsky, the McDonald's Corporation Regional Training Manager who came to Saipan to conduct the class. Those in attendance were, front row, from left, Kisina Hossain, Gissel Dela Rosa, Ana S. Olaes and store general manager Marcia E. Ayuyu. Back row, from left, Sergio Achas, Narlou Achas, Conrad Cuengco, Manny Corpuz and Joseph Achas.

SSHS librarian awarded $1,000 scholarship

CHICAGO, IL—The young Adult Library Services Association, the fastest-growing division of the American Library Association, named Sudi Q. Napalan the recipient of the 2008 Baker & Taylor Conference Grant. She will receive a $1,000 grant to attend the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif., June 26-July 2.

Napalan

The grant is awarded for first time attendance at an annual conference. The recipient must be a member of YALSA and must have between one and 10 years experience working with the teenagers.

Napalan is the school library media specialist at Saipan Southern High School in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

In addition to teaching both faculty and 753 students a well-crafter program of information literacy skills, Napalan has increased the hours of her library and collaborated with her public library system to teach teen mothers and fathers learn to read to their children and use library resources.

Upon hearing that she had won the award, Napalan exclaimed, " I'm kind of speechless! I'm just excited that I'm going to be in a room with more than 100 librarians at one time! I plan on bringing back my knowledge from the annual conference and sharing it with all my colleagues who can't make it to the mainland."

The YALSA Baker & Taylor Award Committee members are Courtney Lewis, chair, Wyoming Seminary Upper School, Kingston, PA; Connie Adam Bush. Daniel Boone Regional Library, Columbia, MO; E.M. Roublow, Los Angeles Public Library, San Pedro, CA. Christopher Shoemaker, New York Library, Bronx, N.Y.; and Patsy L. Weeks, Heart of Texas Literature Center, Brown, TX.

For more than 50 years, YALSA has been the world leader in selecting books, videos, and audio books for teens. For more information about YALSA or the list of recommended reading, viewing and listening, go to www.ala.yalsa/booklist, or contact the YALSA office by phone, 800-545-2433, ext. 4390; or e-mail: yalsa@ala.org. ***(YALSA)***

DPH, lawmakers agree to work on healthcare needs

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Department of Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez and other key management staff of DPH met with the Health, Education and Welfare Committee to discuss DPH's goals and objectives for fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

"The overall meeting was upbeat and positive, with both sides agreeing to open communications and to work together to address the healthcare needs of the CNMI," Villagomez said.

DPH shared with the committee its strategic plans in addressing both the immediate needs and its longer term goals and objectives.

Villagomez said he is working with the Legislature on a bill that will include registered pharmacist as one of the positions exempted from the salary cap.

"I have handed over a copy of the bill to both Congressman Heinz Hofscneider and Congressman Ralph Torres and I am hoping that they will introduce it as soon as possible," Villagomez said.

The Commonwealth Health Center has been working with only one licensed pharmacist after the governor did not renew the contract of Anthony Raho, who headed the hospital's inpatient pharmacy for 12 years.

However, "Tony Raho has agreed to come in and will help us out as we work out the solution to the current situation that we have," Villagomez said.

He added that he will also be communicating with Sen. Paul Manglona to help pave the way for the bill to pass the Senate.

According to Villagomez, the governor, who is off-island, had informed him that he will sign it into law "as soon as it gets to his desk."

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §8113, the Civil Service Commission hereby gives notice that the Board will meet on February 21, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Civil Service Commission Conference Room, 1211 Capitol Hill Road, Capitol Hill, Saipan. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Seating of new Commission Members**
4. **Election of Officers**
5. **Adoption of Minutes**
6. **Executive Directors Report**
7. **Legal Counsel Report**
   a. P.L. No. 15-43 Boards and Commissions Reform Act of 2006
   b. Cases to be scheduled for hearing
8. **Old Business**
   a. Adoption of amendments to Personnel Service Rules and Regulations
9. **New Business**
   a. House Bill No. 15-122
   b. Renumbering of Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations
   c. P.L. No. 15-119
9. **Announcements**
10. **Adjourn**

Daniel N. Nielsen Felix R. Fitial Alicia T. Odoshi

OPA's $1.5 million surplus eyed for CUC

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Legislation has been proposed to re-appropriate $1.5 million from the Office of the Public Auditor's surplus funds for the local utility.

The money would be used for non-fuel costs such as personnel and operations.

The bill is seen to make up for the revenue that the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation lost when the 15th Legislature passed a law scrapping the non-fuel component of electric rates.

Representatives David M. Apatang and Justo S. Quitugua sponsored the bill.

OPA posted the surplus after spending only $1.6 million of its $3.1-million budget in fiscal year 2007.

It was the second year in a row that OPA reported a surplus. In FY2006, OPA had excess funds amounting to $580,000. The agency had a budget of $2.2 million and spent $1.6 million that year.

Constitutional and statutory provisions guarantee funding for OPA. Under the law, OPA receives 1 percent of all local appropriations and is authorized to receive 1 percent of the operations budgets of all public corporations and autonomous agencies.

The local utility is currently under a state of emergency because it cannot afford to pay for fuel and repair its rundown power generators.

The cost of fuel has quadrupled in a little over four years—from $25 per barrel in September 2003, to over $120 per barrel last week.

The state of emergency declaration allows the governor to assume full control of CUC and suspend all regulatory statute provisions and regulations applicable to CUC, including procurement regulations. The governor will also have the power to reprogram all available funds to address CUC's problems.

Sablan wants legislative process slowed down

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Rep. Tina Sablan is drafting amendments to the rules governing the House of Representatives that would help slow down the legislative process.

The freshman lawmaker believes that legislators are acting too fast on bills, passing future laws without carefully examining their implications.

She said the amendments would "encourage all of us legislators to be more careful, deliberative, and responsible when taking any action."

"I firmly believe we need to slow the legislative process down, and increase transparency in the Legislature," Sablan said.

"Legislators should have the benefit of timely notice and adequate information so they can exercise due diligence in reviewing and acting on bills. Citizens should have the same so they can be more informed about how they are being served by their elected officials, and so they can get involved if they choose," she added.

Sablan also said she is working on legislation to update the Open Government Act and apply it to the Legislature. She called for help in drafting and reviewing the amendments.

As a private citizen, Sablan spearheaded a petition on the Open Government Act last year. The petition did not make it to the Nov. 3 ballot, as it was about 200 signatures short when the deadline ended.

Sablan said that petition is still open for signatures. If the initiative does not pass the Legislature first, it can be submitted for placement on the 2009 ballot.

The government transparency law used to be applicable to both houses of the Legislature. However, the 9th Legislature passed a law exempting the Legislature from the Open Government Act.

12 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has raised the red flag on 12 sites on Saipan and advises the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

The division said that samples collected from Plumeria Hotel, DPW Channel Bridge, S. Puerto Rico Dump, American Memorial Park, Hafa Adai Hotel, Hafa Adai Drainage, Civic Center Beach, Sugar Dock, CK #2 Drainage, San Antonio Lift Station, S. Laulau Beach, and Hidden Beach on Saipan contained excessive concentrations of the fecal indicator bacteria enterococci that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

Water quality samples for Rota beaches are assigned a green flag.

DEQ analyzes samples of marine recreational and storm drainage water from 50 locations on Saipan, 10 on Tinian, 12 on Rota and a total of 11 samples from the shore surrounding Managaha. The agency welcomes all inquiries as to thequality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter. ***(DEQ)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Moderators and attendees of the NMC UCEDD training session in Rota gather for a photo. From left, Tony Chong, Kabir Homayan, Ray Diaz, Leo Pangelinan, Marissa Guerrero, Dave Attao, Bernice Ravelle, Cynthia Attao, Lulu Malone, Tee Abraham, Larissa Larson, and Carole Hosono.

NMC strengthens advocacy network through training

In a move that strengthens and empowers the advocacy networks that serve individuals with disabilities, the Northern Marianas College through the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Program recently conducted a comprehensive training session for key service providers and consumers.

The training sessions, which were held on Rota last weekend, was geared particularly toward members of the UCEDD's Consumer Advisory Committee. The council consists of parents and representatives of agencies that provide services, support or advocacy for people with disabilities and their families.

"NMC's UCEDD program has provided like myself the opportunity to learn more about federal laws revolving around developmental disabilities," said Marissa Guerrero, chairperson of the CAC. "Being a CAC member of UCEDD has opened doors for me to advocate and educate as well as assist other parents, individuals with developmental disabilities, and families on how to improve services and opportunities for our children and community."

"This training, the first of its kind in the CNMI, is an integral part of NMC's goal of building capacity and enhancing advocacy in the community," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez. "We will continue to play an active role in promoting opportunities for individuals with disabilities."

Serving as a critical link to the community, the CAC is also one of the ways UCEDD involves stakeholders in formulating policies and standards of participation, education, research, and other functions. In addition to the CAC, representatives form the Developmental Disabilities Council and the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. also attended the training session.

Chief among UCEDD's aims is to foster the development of programs and activities that promote equal opportunity, independence, productivity, and an improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. It is sponsored through a grant from the University of Hawaii's University Center of Excellence program and is the sister program of American Samoa Community College UCEDD Program. ***(NMC)***

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Commercial cleaner awarded $18K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An employer made a commercial cleaner perform delivery services, work 12 hours each day with no day off, and pay for his own Labor processing fees.

Labor Administrative Hearing Officer Jerry Cody found Kai Hua Lin, president of the American Kai Hua Corp. that owns Kai Hua Restaurant, liable to pay the worker, Ganqing Zhang, a total of $18,003.40 for unpaid wages, liquidated damages, contractual damages, and reimbursement damages.

Cody ruled that both Lin and the American Kai Hua Corp. committed labor law violations such as unlawfully collecting processing fees, failing to pay wages, and making the employee work beyond the scope of his job classification, among other violations.

Cody permanently disqualified the respondents from employing alien workers in the CNMI and required them to each pay a $2,000 sanction for labor law violations.

Zhang was allowed to seek a new employer.

Lin managed the Kai Hua Restaurant and appears to have made all decisions with respect to the corporate operation on Saipan.

Zhang was employed as a commercial cleaner by the corporation, but was assigned to work in the restaurant.

Lin filed the work permit application and obtained a conditional grant of transfer to employ Zhang on June 2, 2006. At the time the application was filed, Lin required Zhang to pay him $1,200 in order to process his permit.

The worker's permit expired on June 2, 2007.

Although the permit classified Zhang's job as a commercial cleaner, the employer made him deliver the restaurant's food to various locations around the island.

Zhang worked for 12 hours each day for seven days, with no days off. He worked from April 2006 until March 5, 2007.

He stopped working in March 2007 after he demanded back wages and the employer failed to pay. He filed the labor case on May 29, 2007.

In his order, Cody said that the time records produced by Lin after Zhang filed the labor case were disregarded as inaccurate and fraudulent.

Cody said the worker gave credible testimony that these timecards were essentially blank when he was asked by the employer to sign them.

Cody said the complainant's testimony that he was required to pay his own processing fees is truthful.

The hearing officer found that the respondents owe Zhang $7,608.70 in unpaid wages, $7,608.70 in liquidated damages, $1,586 in contractual damages, and $1,200 in reimbursement damages.

ERRATUM

Yesterday's article titled 'Q4 down across the board' should have read 2007 down across the board.' The first two paragraphs of the story should have read. "The Department of Commerce released its 2007 Economic Indicator report yesterday and it confirmed what everyone in the Commonwealth already suspects–the islands' economy is still in bad shape. Across the board, Commerce's data revealed a downcast picture of the Commonwealth's business activity in 2007." Our apologies.

GRAND DIVAS JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The contestants in the Grand Diva Lip Sync Contest pose with the show's hosts during the "My Funny Valentine" lip sync face off, held at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V on Feb. 14, 2008, Valentine's Day. The PTI text star DIVA was also launched at the event. The contestants are Jackie Madrigal, Linda Cullen, Jaz, Jolly, Sunshine, Patricia, Jackie Bernabe, Lyka, Tammy, Venus, Sharmaine, Angel, Jolina, Krystala, Milkshake, and Monique. The show was hosted by the Tres Marianas (Marconi, Hapi and Paul).

CUC

From Page 1

conserve our limited water supply," Guerrero said.

Metering will ensure that each customer pays for water based on actual usage. CUC and the Water Task Force believe this will encourage residents to conserve water. The electronic meters being installed also provide data that will help identify leaks—another aid in conserving water. The task force has already replaced meters that were experiencing manufacturing problems with display readings.

A study is currently ongoing on CUC's water and wastewater rates. CUC's consultant, Economists.com, has said that adjustments to the rates may be overdue. CUC has not implemented any significant increase to the rates in almost 15 years.

According to Economists.com, the average water and wastewater utility throughout the world increases rates by 5 to 6 percent a year, in order to cope with inflation and pay for repair and maintenance.

In the Commonwealth, additional pressures are present. Water supply and quality, health issues, and the skyrocketing fuel prices all have a financial implication for CUC, he said.

The consulting firm also says that the local rates are too low compared to the United States. In the CNMI, a customer who consumes 10,000 gallons in a month pays about $30. In the United States, the same amount of usage pays $65. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

REACHING

From Page 1

"It has been generally assumed that living to 100 years of age was limited to those who had not developed chronic illness," said Dr. William Hall of the University of Rochester.

Hall has a theory for how these people could live to that age. In an editorial in Monday's Archives of Internal Medicine, where the study was published, he writes that it might be thanks to doctors who aggressively treat these older folks' health problems, rather than taking an "ageist" approach that assumes they wouldn't benefit.

For the study, Boston University researchers did phone interviews and health assessments of more than 500 women and 200 men who had reached 100. They found that roughly two-thirds of them had avoided significant age-related ailments.

But the rest, dubbed "survivors," had developed an age-related disease before reaching 85, including high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes. Yet many functioned remarkably well—nearly as well as their disease-free peers.

Overall, the men were functioning better than the women. Nearly three-fourths of the male survivors could bathe and dress themselves, while only about one-third of the women could.

The researchers think that may be because the men had to be in exceptional condition to reach 100. "Women, on the other hand, may be better physically and socially adept at living with chronic and often disabling conditions," wrote lead author Dr. Dellara Terry and her colleagues.

Rosa McGee is one of the healthy women in the study who managed to avoid chronic disease. Now 104, the retired cook and seamstress is also strikingly lucid.

"My living habits are beautiful," McGee said in an interview at her daughter's Chicago apartment. "I don't take any medicines. I don't smoke and I don't drink. Never did anything like that."

Until late 2006, when she fell in her St. Louis home, McGee lived alone and took care of herself. Now in Chicago, she is less mobile but still takes walks a few times weekly down the apartment building hallways, with her daughter's help.

McGee credits her faith in God for her good health. She also gets lots of medical attention—a doctor and nurse make home visits regularly.

Genes surely contributed—McGee's maternal grandparents lived to age 100 and 107.

But while genes are important, scientists don't think they tell the whole story about longevity.

A second, larger study of men in their 70s found that those who avoided smoking, obesity, inactivity, diabetes and high blood pressure greatly improved their chances of living into their 90s. In fact, they had a 54 percent chance of living that long.

Their survival decreased with each risk factor, and those with all five had only a 4 percent chance of living into their 90s, according to Harvard University researchers.

Those who managed to avoid lifestyle-related ailments also increased their chances of functioning well physically and mentally two decades later.

The study followed 2,357 men for about 25 years or until death, starting in their early 70s. About 40 percent survived to at least age 90. Among survivors, 24 percent had none of the five risk factors.

"It's not just luck, it's not just genetics. ... It's lifestyle" that seems to make a big difference, said lead author Dr. Laurel Yates of Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"It's get your shoes on, get out there, and do some exercise," she said. "These are some things you can do" to increase the chances of a long life.

Yates said it's never too late to adopt a healthier lifestyle, though the findings don't address whether waiting until age 70 to stop smoking, lose weight and exercise will increase longevity.

Hall noted that the United States has more than 55,000 centenarians, and that Americans 85 and older are the country's fastest-growing group of older adults.

He said the new research underscores how important it is for doctors to become adept at treating the oldest of the old, who are "becoming the bread and butter of the clinical practice of internal medicine."

JUVENILE

From Page 1

The maintenance contract for the building's electrical and plumbing system is estimated at $24,000 a year, according to Faisao.

"This service is to ensure safe, decent and sanitary facility for the residents and staff," he said.

The contract with the Pacific Security Alarm to upgrade security systems due to malfunctions is estimated at $24,000 a year.

Faisao said the security system is to ensure reliable security system and to prevent liability.

The re-certification trainings for DYS staff in the area of CPR and first aid classes, food handing and others would also be affected by the drastic cut, he said. The training is estimated at $6,000 a year.

Faisao explained that the re-certification training "is vital to the operations of the facility as majority of staff are in direct contact with clients on a daily basis."

Other services provided at the facility would also be affected, Faisao said, to include the contractual service for staff training, estimated at $36,000 a year; dental and medical physical examinations for juvenile detainees, estimated at $4,000 per year; the 24-hour Emergency Shelter Care operations and supervisions, estimated at $48,000 a year, and the foster care placements, estimated at $36,000 a year.

Faisao added that the DCCA Office of the Secretary shoulders majority of its division operations as well, in terms of funding.

Other services that would be most affected by cuts in the DCCA budget are:

- Yearly maintenance contract for the Ada Gymnasium, valued at $24,000;
- Fuel and lubrications for all division vehicles, estimated at $48,000 per year;
- Communication expenses for all divisions, estimated at $48,000 per year;
- Supplies for office and operations for Saipan, estimated at $24,000 per year;
- Maintenance of Aging Office, estimated at $24,000 per year;
- Ongoing renovations of DCCA divisions, estimated at $50,000 per year;
- Co-share of expenses under the ongoing FEMA projects, estimated at $48,000;
- The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, which assists low-income families, disabled, and elders subsidize their power utilities.

Based on DCCA's budget comparison and payroll projections, the department was provided a $1.7 million budget last year. However, due to the continuing resolution and the 2.38 percent budget reduction, the department is currently operating on a $1.6 million budget for FY 2008.

Faisao said the department is ready to work with the 16th Legislature in finding an amicable budget proposal that will not disrupt the livelihood of children and families in the Commonwealth.

Newly formed NWTF names new officers

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela and the 10th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council met for the first time with the Neighborhood Watch Task Force on Wednesday at the Saipan Mayor's Office.

The task force was officially organized with the election of officers and formation of four standing committees, with four chairmanships to chair each committee.

Elected as chairman was police officer Jason Tarkong, representing the Department of Public Safety. Valencia Tenorio of the Marianas Visitors Authority was elected vice chairman. The secretary and treasurer positions were not selected.

The Program Committee, chaired by William E. Santos, will identify funds and to establish programs within the villages on Saipan. The Inter-Agency Committee, chaired by Valencia Tenorio, will act as liaison between the committee and the different agencies of the local government. The Community and Business Committee, chaired by Manny Mangarero, will have direct communications between the businesses and all the precincts. It will also create precinct-level participation. The Youth Committee, chaired by Cil Damian, will be tasked with the responsibility to formulate and create youth programs in the villages. All the chairpersons will be responsible to create their own subcommittees within all the precincts, and will hold village meetings regularly.

The task force's responsibility is to undertake the necessary needs assessment, conduct studies and develop action plans and implementation strategies in consultation with and the assistance of appropriate local, state and federal government organizations in devising a permanent neighborhood watch program in every precinct on Saipan.

The task force is composed of seven members who will serve a two-year term, with the advice and consent of the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council.

Tudela signed Municipal Ordinance No. 9-01-2007, last year in February establishing the task force to enhance the safety, security and protection in the villages of Saipan.

The task force unanimously voted to hold bi-weekly meetings in the next three months.

Crimes on the island over the years have risen alarmingly due to suspicious activities that often turned unlawful in certain homestead communities, isolated and remote farm areas and at certain villages.

As more parents enter the workforce, more homes become unattended from 7:30am to 4:30pm five days a week, making these homes and the community prone to vandalism and other criminal activities.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Neighborhood Watch Task Force newly elected chair PO3 Jason Tarkong and Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela lead the first organizational meeting of the Saipan Neighborhood Watch Task Force at the Saipan Mayor's Office conference room in San Antonio Wednesday afternoon.

Scholarship program recipients chosen

Four students have been chosen to receive scholarship funds raised during the awards gala recognizing Christine Ann Won Pat Baleto as Businesswoman of the Year for 2007.

The recipients, Leilani L. Manalo, Rachel P. Field, Beverly I. Bautista, and Karen M. Carpo were presented with $2,000 scholarship checks each on Friday, Feb. 8.

8First Hawaiian Bank and *Guam Business* named Baleto, general manager of Market Wholesale Distributors Inc., the winner of the second annual Businesswoman of the Year award on April 24, 2007.

This Maga'haga (Chamorro term for princess) Award recognizes businesswomen who have made a difference and have "raised the bar" in the field in which sheisthey are involved.

Proceeds from the awards gala were donated to the University of Guam for a scholarship program that encourages students to become successful businesspeople and to contribute to Guam's society. Representatives from both First Hawaiian Bank and Glimpses Publications reviewed applicants for the scholarships. Applicants for the Businesswoman of the Year scholarship program were judged on grades, involvement in the community and potential to become successful businesspeople. ***(PR)***

The recipients, Leilani L. Manalo, Rachel P. Field, Beverly I. Bautista, and Karen M. Carpo were presented with $2,000 scholarship checks each on Friday, Feb. 8. F

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Front row from left to right, scholarship recipients Karen M. Carpo, Leilani L. Manalo, Rachel P. Field, and Beverly I. Bautista. Standing in back row, from left, Christine Ann Won Pat Baleto, general manager of Market Wholesale Distributors Inc. and 2007 Businesswoman of the Year winner; Dr. Helen Whippy, interim president, UOG Board of Regents; Maureen Maratita, publisher, Glimpses Publications; Narlin Manalo, vice president/Private Banking officer, First Hawaiian Bank ; Irene Mafnas, AVP & Operations officer, Guam & CNMI Region Office, First Hawaiian Bank; Flora Baza Quan, executive director, UOG Endowment Foundation; and Kathleen Salas, principal broker, Argent Estates and 2007 Businesswoman of the Year past nominee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMC students and staff, along with representatives from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, flank NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez after she signed the "Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve" Resolution.

NMC reaffirms troop support

The Northern Marianas College shored up its support of National Guard and Reserve service members when NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez signed the "Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve" resolution at a recent signing ceremony on campus.

By signing the Resolution, which bears the U.S. Department of Defense Seal, NMC has pledged to: 1) not deny employment to anyone serving the Guard or the Reserves; 2) not limit or reduce employee job or career opportunities because of service in the Guard or Reserve; and, 3) grant leaves of absence for military services in the Guard and Reserve consistent with existing laws.

"The contributions of National Guard and Reserve service members are invaluable to the CNMI and our country," Fernandez said. "We are honored to be signing this resolution and hope other agencies and employers follow suit."

The resolution was initiated by representatives of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Guam-CNMI Committee, which is based on Guam. In its letter to Fernandez, committee member Severina Ogo stated that the ESGR was established to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. It is the lead Department of Defense organization for this mission.

In addition to the NMC president and ESGR representatives, various student leaders and members of the SROTC also attended the signing ceremony.

"As a matter of fact, we have one NMC employee who was recently called to active duty," Fernandez added. "This resolution is one of the ways to show her that we stand behind her during her deployment." ***(NMC)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Free, fair, or what?

Elections are rarely stolen on election day, except in the world's most primitive countries. In more developed nations such as Pakistan, they're discreetly rigged over the months leading up to the balloting, usually by subtle manipulation of who can run, how voter lists are prepared, what the media are permitted to report and who supervises the counting of ballots and referee disputes.

Pakistan's opposition parties have long complained about such hanky-panky in the run-up to the Feb. 18 elections, and even the Bush administration is implicitly conceding that it's probably too late for the contest to be free and fair. Instead, it appears willing to settle for an election that is "credible"—the word Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs, used three times in congressional testimony last week.

Boucher is a career ambassador whose language is a primer in diplomatic precision. When Boucher says, "We want to see a successful transition to democracy and civilian rule. We want to see the emergence of leaders through a credible election," that's a deliberate signal to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and his opponents that the balloting doesn't have to be free and fair, just good enough to enable some degree of post-election power-sharing.

The Bush democracy project isn't just dead, it has become an embarrassing reminder of excesses past. In its waning days, this administration has become so risk-averse that it will hold its nose at any sham election as long as it forestalls violence, however transient the illusion of stability may prove. If Musharraf steals the election but lets the opposition win just enough to keep it from taking to the streets, that will be good enough for Washington.

The question, however, is whether it will be good enough for Pakistanis. Two new polls suggest not. An International Republican Institute survey found that 84 percent of Pakistanis said their nation is headed in the wrong direction, 80 percent rated the government's performance as "poor," and 89 percent said Pakistan should not "cooperate with the U.S. in its war on terror." The "throw the pro-American bums out" mood is confirmed by a poll by Gallup Pakistan. Two-thirds of respondents said stability would be enhanced if Musharraf resigned, and 47 percent said they don't believe the elections will be free and fair.

The United States insists that these elections offer a chance for democracy. If so, it is only the shallowest and least representative kind. With American acquiescence, Musharraf is poised to adopt a democracy that contradicts the will of his own people.

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

Clinton has proven odds against Republicans

By JOSEPH C. WILSON IV
Special to The Baltimore Sun

Wilson, a former ambassador, served in Iraq in the years leading up to the Persian Gulf War; he is the author of The Politics of Truth.

With the emergence of Sen. John McCain as the presumptive Republican nominee, the choice for the Democrats in the 2008 presidential election now shifts to who is best positioned to beat him, in what promises to be a more hard-fought campaign—and perhaps a nastier one—than Democrats had anticipated.

Sen. Barack Obama's promise of transformation and an end of partisan politics has its seductive appeal. The Bush-Cheney era, after all, has been punctuated by smear campaigns, character assassinations and ideological fervor.

Nobody dislikes such poisonous partisanship, especially in foreign policy, more than I do. I am one of very few Foreign Service officers to have served as ambassador in the administrations of both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, yet I have spent the past four years fighting a concerted character-assassination campaign orchestrated by the George W. Bush White House.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton is one of the few who fully understood the stakes in that battle. Time and again, she reached out to my wife—outed CIA officer Valerie Plame Wilson—and me to remind us that, as painful as the attacks were, we simply could not allow ourselves to be driven from the public square by bullying. Clinton knew from experience, having spent the better part of the past 20 years fighting the Republican attack machine. She is a fighter.

But will Obama fight? His brief time on the national scene gives little comfort. Consider a February 2006 exchange of letters with McCain on the subject of ethics reform. The wrathful McCain accused Obama of being "disingenuous," to which Obama meekly replied, "The fact that you have now questioned my sincerity and my desire to put aside politics for the public interest is regrettable but does not in any way diminish my deep respect for you."

McCain was insultingly dismissive but successful in intimidating his inexperienced colleague. Thus, in his one known face-to-face encounter with McCain, Obama failed to stand his ground.

What gives us confidence that Obama will be stronger the next time he faces McCain, a seasoned political fighter with extensive national-security credentials? Even more important, what special disadvantages does Obama carry into this contest on questions of national security?

How will Obama answer McCain about his careless remark about unilaterally bombing Pakistan—perhaps blowing up an already difficult relationship with a nuclear state threatened by Islamic extremists? How will Obama respond to charges made by the Kenyan government that his campaigning activities in Kenya in support of his distant cousin running for president there made him "a stooge" and constituted interference in the politics of an important and besieged ally in the war on terror?

How will he answer charges that his desire for unstructured personal summits without preconditions with a host of America's adversaries, from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Kim Jong-il, would be little more than premature capitulation?

Contrary to the myth of the Obama campaign, 2008 is not the year for transcendental transformation. The task for the next administration will be to repair the damage done by eight years of radical rule. And the choice for Americans is clear: four more years of corrupt Republican rule, senseless wars, evisceration of the Constitution, emptying of the national treasury—or rebuilding our government and our national reputation, piece by piece.

In order to effect practical change against a determined adversary, we do not need a would-be philosopher-king but a seasoned gladiator who understands the fight Democrats will face in the fall campaign and in governing.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly."

If he were around today, Roosevelt might be speaking of the woman in the arena. Clinton has been in that arena for a generation. She is one of the few to have defeated the attack machine that is today's Republican Party and to have emerged stronger. She is deeply knowledgeable about governing; she made herself into a power in the Senate; she is respected by our military; and she never flinches. She has never been intimidated, not by any Republican—not even McCain.

Obama claims to represent the future, but it should be increasingly evident that he is not the man for this moment, especially with McCain's arrival. We've seen a preview of that contest already. It was a TKO.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

Tinian's charter

An article in Friday's *Tribune* was headlined "Charter Bill For Tinian Vetoed." That article and the unfortunate action taken by Acting Governor Villagomez indicate, once again, the fact that our central government is dysfunctional and truly does not understand the governing process. It also indicates the apparent desire of the central government to hold onto all encompassing "power" and the latent fear of the loss of an ability to "control." (Hint: the desire to abolish local municipal councils because they are "useless")

The article is rife with examples of dysfunction—and they are not listed in the article in an orderly manner:

1. As stated; "A charter is a document that sets forth the principles, functions, and organization of a government, corporate body, or other group." Article VI, Section 8 of the CNMI Constitution contains the only mention of a "chartered municipal government" established – and ONLY for Rota and Tinian & Aguiguan – NOT for Saipan or the Northern Islands. The fact that Tinian & Aguiguan IS a "chartered Municipality" was affirmed by a legal question submitted to and ruled on by the CNMI Supreme Court in 2003.

Sections 1 through 7 of that article provide for an extremely minimal and "bare bones" basic guide to the initial limited aspects of such district oriented "self rule." Under the old TT Government, a unique charter for Tinian was implemented by the TT commission about 1954. It was a seven page document spelling out such "local rule." This document fell by the wayside when the new CNM I constitution over-rode such documents.

However, in all this, the CNMI constitution falls FAR short with its "guidelines" for setting out the principles, functions and detailed organization of a local "government" and simply states that the island IS a chartered municipality without sufficient detail to effectively "govern" at the local level. Examples of municipal charters abound on the Internet and are generally considered required documents – aside and apart from any constitutional mandate to simply "have one."

2. Acting Governor Villagomez was inaccurate in his statements that such a charter was "unnecessary" and that the Tinian Delegation was "not authorized" to enact a charter. Indeed, by the very nature of CNMI law (see item 4 below), it is that very unit that should enact the "principles, functions and organization" of the *local* chartered governmental authority. Speaking of things that come back around to bite you in the a___.

According to one of the framers of the CNMI Constitution that I consulted with, and a couple of local attorneys familiar with the "chartered" form of government, it was intended from the start that Tinian & Aguiguan and Rota enact separate documents, based on the Constitution's requirements, to "set forth" the missing items. Since such a document would *only* control the "principles, functions and organization" of a *local* governing unit (the individual municipality), the delegation from the local unit IS the group *currently* authorized to enact a "local" charter and the document *is* a "necessary" part of local government.

There is no way the entire CNMI legislature should be allowed to enact "local" charter rules under an already established charter area that does *not* include all of the CNMI! In fact, it is the local municipal council that should enact such rules as the CNMI (as a "state") has already done its part by avowing (in its constitution) that Tinian is a chartered municipality and by giving appropriate basic guidelines on the content of such rules but not the rules themselves. (Hint: I think I smell the beginnings of a successful lawsuit? A chartered municipality CAN do that!)

In fact, one of those "framers" told me that he had anticipated that such documents would have been enacted many years ago.

3. The statement that the Supreme Court stated: "Tinian is a chartered municipality and need not take further steps in that regard" is misleading, incomplete and inaccurate. *Nowhere* in the Supreme Court's affirmation of the legal question does it state that Tinian need not take further steps in the creation of a valid charter document spelling out principles, functions and organization. The only apparent intention of the Supreme Court was that Tinian need not *establish* itself as a chartered municipality because it already was one, thus implying (through omission or otherwise) that indeed, such a document should be created.

4) More to the root of the matter, the early CNMI legislatures actually violated provisions of the constitution (in my humble opinion) and *usurped* authority it was not given in its "creation" of senatorial district "delegations" charged with enacting *local* legislation through the state level body and requiring approval by a governor instead of a mayor. This appears to be a gross and egregious "power grab" that has for many years thwarted development in districts other than Saipan. It has also led to continued omnipotence by a central government feeling the heady euphoria of power. And once you have power, it is *really* hard to give up any part of it – especially if having it results in your ability to "live better."

I hope for three things: a) that the Tinian delegation will find a way to enact this vital legislation anyway, b) the Lieutenant Governor will go back to school and take a basic civics class, and c) the central government will get over its centrist and self-defeating attitude and get in line with the rest of the United States—of which we *are* a part!

It is, in fact, the very lack of rules as would be spelled out by such a document, which allows activities at the local level by which some in the past have fallen astray of the law. Such rules would permit greater local citizen input and participation in the workings of local government and allow greater protections afforded to all from the possible detrimental actions of the few.

It would also permit greater efficiency (and thus lower cost for better delivery of services) at the local level and hold accountable those in power and in government service. Goods and services would be provided at the local level without the encumbrance of another (higher) level of government that is truly unnecessary, does not understand local needs or capabilities and frequently makes arbitrary decisions based, in no small part, on petty fears or jealousies.

The intended local charter for Tinian abides by the CNMI constitutional guidelines, permits better local governance and prevents the central government's micro-management of strictly local affairs—and *that*, my friends, is exactly what our central government is afraid of. Such a situation exists almost nowhere else in the United States at the state or federal levels. It is, in fact, a remnant of tribal feudalism and anarchy, long ago deleted from truly democratic governments.

Dr. Thomas D. Arkle Jr.
San Jose, Tinian

Taotao Tano distances self from new group

Taotao Tano wishes to thank and congratulate the new group for their support during our motorcade. Special thanks goes out to Mr. Diego Blanco and Marylou Ada, attorney Ed Arriola Sr. Mr.Danny and Joan Aquino, Felicidad Ogomuro, Kimo Rosario, Jesus Taisague and Pedro Deleon Guerrero (Paduna).

Yes, it is true that we have disengaged and declined to attend further meeting with this new group who just woke up yesterday who are not in support of Taotao Tano but to insult and disrespect Taotao Tano. In times of crises, we the Taotao Tano CNMI group refuses to handpick people who want to be part of our movement. Taotao Tano CNMI welcomes everyone; it does not matter whether what background you appear in.

People may agree or disagree with our approach to issues and we respect one's opinion in a positive and constructive manner to include criticisms. Disagreements is tolerated only because we are pursuing a very controversial movement in cleaning our island, which involves all sorts of groups, businesses, people, leaders etc.

As president of Taotao Tano I want to notify the entire people of the CNMI that we will not be politicized, used, nor bought by anyone, including this new group for we are the common ordinary people who have suffered far to long from injustices of our leaders, corruptors, self-interest individuals. We have major pressing issues to address such as this sensitive, instigated, and conspired federal legislation for which we have no time to sit down and chit chat on upcoming fiestas or special recognitions. Time is of the essence and the U.S. Congress is not wasting time deliberating on a discriminatory, conspired federal legislation. We've always advocated matters of public affairs concerning transparency, accountability, integrity and the truth in a straightforward, informative and diplomatic stance, and we've always envisioned and believed that our respect, humbleness and our silence as indigenous people of the land has led all of us to the detriment of our well being.

Taotao Tano welcomes anyone to join our group for we are not racists, unlike this new group who don't allow haoles or outsiders. If you believe in the Taotao Tano group we encourage you to be a member in the pursuit to achieve a higher standard of living for each and everyone in our homeland.

We would like to inform everyone that we have been in communication for the past month in efforts against this instigated federal legislation with a San Francisco based local group made up of both the CNMI and Guam, including the National Chamorro Association, the Chamorro Nations from Rota, and Tinian have all joined in as additional allies of Taotao Tano.

Gregorio Cruz
Taotao Tano CNMI Association Inc.

Search for a better life

It seems as those that are for the federalization of the CNMI are all about the rights of the contract workers. They came here with a clear understanding of the rights they would and do have while here. They would have the right to freely leave whenever they wanted if they did not like the situation or island. They would have the right to stay if they agreed to continue to abide by the contract they signed. Now they want to change the rules in the middle of the game.

Federalization may end up being good for the U.S. citizens of the Commonwealth, and it may not. If they had chosen China, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, India, Germany or really any other place instead of the CNMI, would they be doing what they are doing now? No. They came here under a carefully considered, clear, unambiguous signed contract; and now they want to renege on that done deal. This is what nearly everyone who is NOT a contract worker is against. If you don't like what you agreed to, then leave.

As Paul Harsany so ignorantly says, "Your right to independence and self-rule ended the day the first resort went up" and William J Ballard says "No one is out to harm the interests of the indigenous people of the CNMI." Contract workers want what everyone wants—a better life. No one can fault them for that. Go find it in the Philippines or China! I do not and the Tao Tao Tano does not if I read their intentions correctly. What they, and every other U.S. citizen wants, is a better life also—and that better life is envisioned to be free of a huge mass of people that will overcome them and change the way of life, the culture, and the traditions that they hold. Contract workers show every intention to do just that.

William "Bamboo" McCue
Wellington, FL

Kiss your gas goodbye!

According to the news, gasoline prices across the U.S. have fallen below $3 a gallon. The national average price per gallon has fallen 10 to 13 cents in the past two weeks. Why are we still stuck at $2.94? Where is our $.13 per gallon reduction?

It has been reported that Mobil announced that it had set new records for U.S. quarterly and annual corporate profits in 2007. Mobil broke the record it previously had set for profits by a U.S. corporation, earning $40.6 billion last year. It earned $11.7 billion in the fourth quarter, or $2.13 a share, up 14 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006. Revenue for the quarter rose 30 percent, to $116.64 billion. Mobil's profit for the year came to $4.6 million an hour.

Gas prices in the U.S. mainland have gone down, yet Mobil still refuses to give us our fair reduction. Since they are making so much money, we should make their taxes higher. We need other gas suppliers because what we have now is basically a monopoly. Monopolies can basically charge whatever they want. We need public transportation, which can be funded by federal grants, so that we can have a choice of cheaper transportation.

Jesse Torres
Kagman, Saipan

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼75°	▲83° ▼74°	▲83° ▼75°	▲83° ▼74°	▲83° ▼74°

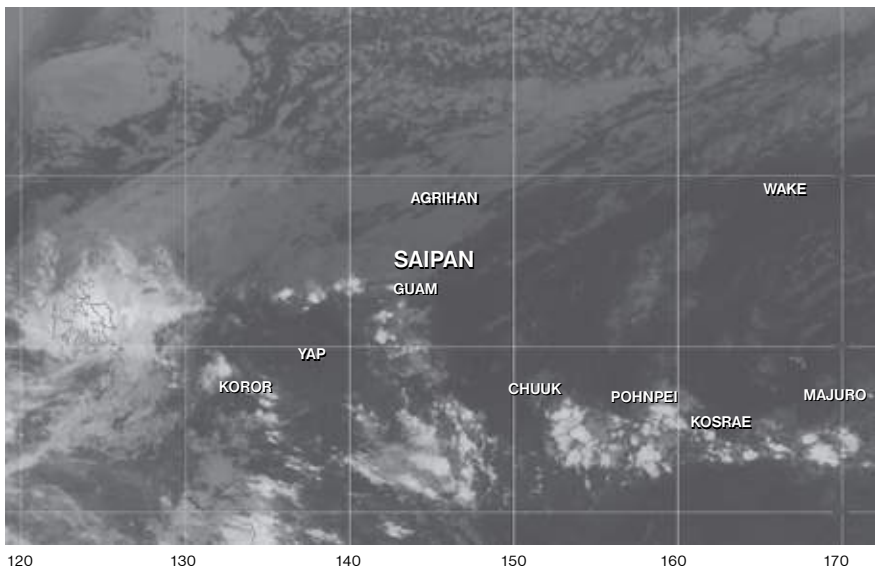
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼78
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼74
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲82	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲70	▼63
Beijing	Sunny	▲43	▼24
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲65	▼57
Honolulu	Sunny	▲79	▼66
London	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼28
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲68	▼50
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲81	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲84	▼67
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲81	▼70
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲31	▼24
Osaka	Cloudy	▲37	▼26
Paris	Sunny	▲44	▼28
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲42	▼18
Rome	Sunny	▲54	▼29
Salem	Sunny	▲53	▼33
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼42
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲33	▼14
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼40
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲38	▼26

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, FEB. 15, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A trade-wind disturbance moving 20 mph toward the southwest is producing scattered showers within 90 miles of a line from 09N146E to 13N143E, in the area between Guam and Yap. A cold front moving 22 mph to the east extends southwestward from 25N169E to 19N159E. The cloud band associated with the front is made up of overcast showery Stratocumulus (SC) with embedded towering Cumulus. Behind the front to the west broken low SC with areas of scattered SC extend back to 130E. West of the Marianas to 130E and between 12N and 20N an areas of overcast low Stratus and SC has remained stationary over the past 6 hours. Trade-wind convergence continue to trigger scattered showers and a few thunderstorms in an area west of Koror between 3N to 8N from 130E to 134E. Also, scattered showers and a few thunderstorms continue to form between the equator and 3N from 130E to 132E.Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from 180 to 140E and between the equator and 07N.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:13AM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
9:04AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
2:01PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
10:20PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:42AM	6:21PM
Sunday	6:41AM	6:21PM
Monday	6:41AM	6:21PM
Tuesday	6:40AM	6:22PM
Wednesday	6:40AM	6:22PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:31PM	3:10AM*
Sunday	2:34PM	4:09AM*
Monday	3:38PM	5:01AM*
Tuesday	4:38PM	5:48AM*
Wednesday	5:36PM	6:30AM*

*Following Day

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Family Worship
3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesdays at Parsonage
7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service
(Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice
(Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice
(Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am– 12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service,
Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

FEBRUARY 16, 1999

'CIP funds the only alternative to revenue from garment'
Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has protested to Washington a plan that would decrease the FY 2000 infrastructure grants that CNMI will receive under a seven-year financial assistance agreement with the US in fear that such move may push the islands into economic instability. The 51 percent cutback in funding for Capital Improvement Projects was contained in the next fiscal year's spending package President Clinton has submitted to Congress. Under the proposed budget, $5.4 million of the $11 million intended for the Northern Marianas will be diverted to Guam to cover the cost of hosting Micronesians by the neighboring island.

Governor told: Lobbyist needed
On the heels of relentless and damaging attacks on the Northern Marianas, several local lawmakers have prodded Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to hire a public relations firm or a lobbying group to defend the island and balance what maybe an irreparable stain on its image in the international community. The local tourism industry, already battered by the prolonged recession in Asia where major haul of its visitors come from, faces serious threat in view of the media firestorm that swirled around the recent lawsuits against Saipan's garment business, according to Rep. Oscar Babauta. The chair of the House Commerce and Tourism Committee also warned against potential impact of the negative publicity in the efforts to attract foreign investments and help spur the local economy.

FEBRUARY 16, 2000

Tanapag residents poised to sue U.S.
Two Texas-based law firms have signified interest in assisting the residents in Tanapag in connection with the planned class action suit to be filed against the U.S. Department of Defense for the widespread contamination of polychlorinated biphenyls in the village. Rep. Dino Jones declined to name the law firms pending the signing of an agreement with village residents. "We will be asking the people to sign the petition designating them as counsels for the case and also the fee agreement. The people will not spend anything while the case is ongoing," he said. He however assured the people that one of the two law firms has a wide experience in handling toxic waste litigation while the other one took charge of the tobacco litigation in Marshall Islands.

Senate plans to allocate funds for NMC's own SBDC
The Senate yesterday stood pat on its plan to appropriate funds to a Small Business Development Center under the Northern Marianas College if the federally-financed program is transferred to the Commonwealth Development Authority. Senate Floor Leader Pete Reyes has firmly opposed the transfer of the U.S. Small Business Administration funded program from the college to CDA. He maintained that the SBDC should remain at the NMC even if it entails additional funding from the CNMI government.

FEBRUARY 16, 2001

NMI cancer patients' treatment in danger
Treatments of patients with advanced cancer may be put in jeopardy if the Department of Public Health proceeds with its plans to cut its agreement with Hawaii-based Queen's Medical Center due to continued medical billing discrepancies. Based on the updated status report for the Medicaid Agency, off-island medical referral patients only incurred an estimated $18,978.81 to-date but hospital staff continue to turn away DPH patients seeking highly specialized cancer treatments at Queen's. Since October last year, almost $1.711 million worth of medical bills were settled to the Hawaii hospital but billings continue to pile up, leaving DPH officials wondering where payments had been diverted that settled hospital bills always fail to show up.

Gov't settles utility bills
Five days prior to the implementation of disconnection processes, officials of Finance department yesterday settled a portion of its overdue utility bill in efforts to prevent possible disruption of power supply. Officials of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation said a billing confirmation received yesterday from the Treasury Office disclosed that the Finance department settled its overdue account scheduled for Feb., 15 payment. The finance department along with other government departments and agencies were among the first agencies provided with disconnection notices following the delinquent utility bills left unpaid over the years.

Business

Bernanke warns of a worsening economy

WASHINGTON (AP)—Using words like "sluggish" and "deteriorated," Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke gave a starkly pessimistic assessment of the nation's economy on Thursday and signaled that the Fed will cut interest rate cuts further if needed to combat the adverse effects of a prolonged housing slump and a severe credit crisis.

Both Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson told a congressional hearing that the economy could still avert a full-blown recession, but Democrats said they believed the government should be doing much more to help millions of Americans cope with a threatened tidal wave of mortgage foreclosures.

Bernanke told the Senate Banking Committee the serious housing slump and a credit crisis triggered by rising defaults in subprime mortgages had greatly strained the economy.

"The outlook for the economy has worsened in recent months and the downside risks to growth have increased," Bernanke told the committee. "To date, the largest economic effects of the financial turmoil appear to have been on the housing market, which, as you know, has deteriorated significantly over the past two years or so."

Importer recalls Valentine lollipops

LAKELAND, Fla. (AP)—The importer of a Valentine's Day lollipop said it was voluntarily recalling the treats after metal fragments were found in at least two lollipops sold at central Florida stores.

Sherwood Brands of Maryland, which imports the candy from China, said it was recalling all of its Pokemon Valentine Cards and Pops, which have been pulled from the shelves of thousands of stores across the country.

Roughly 20 lollipops were seized at Kathleen Elementary School in Lakeland. X-rays determined that only one piece definitely had metal - what appeared to be a staple - baked inside, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said.

On Wednesday, a woman in nearby Mulberry told authorities she found a lollipop with a piece of metal in it in a bag of the same product. The metal appeared to be part of a razor blade, authorities said.

The sheriff's office issued a safety advisory and the Dollar General chain removed the product from its more than 8,000 stores nationwide. The Food and Drug Administration is investigating.

US, Australia reach open skies accord

SYDNEY, Australia (AP)—Australia and the United States have reached a bilateral "open skies" aviation agreement, the countries announced Friday, clearing the way for increased competition on one of the world's most lucrative and protected long-haul routes.

The bilateral agreement abolishes all restrictions on U.S. and Australian air services for carriers of both countries, ending a virtual duopoly on the route held by Qantas and UAL Corp.'s United Airlines. Qantas controls 75 percent of the market share on the Australia-U.S. route, from which it derives around 15 percent of its net profit.

The deal will allow Australian carrier Virgin Blue Holdings Ltd. to begin flights to the United States by the end of the year - but leaves Singapore Airlines Ltd., which has long coveted the route, still without access.

It would also "provide certainty" for Australia's Qantas Airways Ltd. and its budget offshoot Jetstar, allowing them to widen the network of American cities they currently serve, Australian Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement.

IMF urges China to ease yuan controls

BEIJING (AP)—The managing director of the International Monetary Fund said Friday he is urging China to ease exchange-rate controls to help address global financial imbalances and the country's own economic challenges.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn said slower U.S. economic growth should affect China but the IMF still expects the Chinese economy to expand about 10 percent this year.

Strauss-Kahn met in Beijing with Premier Wen Jiabao and China's central bank governor.

"What I am working at is trying to explain to Chinese authorities ... that it's in their own interests to have more flexible exchange rates," he said. This would "help to address both China's economic challenges and global imbalances," he said.

Beijing's trading partners complain that the Chinese currency, the yuan, is kept undervalued, giving an unfair price advantage to Chinese exporters and adding to the country's swollen trade surplus.

The multibillion-dollar influx of export revenues is straining the central bank's ability to contain pressure for prices to rise.

Nation

6 dead in N. Illinois U. hall shooting

DEKALB, Ill. (AP) -- A former student dressed in black walked onto the stage of a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University and opened fire on a packed science class Thursday, killing five students, wounding 16 and setting off a panicked stampede before committing suicide.

Police say they have no motive for the rapid-fire assault, carried out by the gunman who fired indiscriminately into the crowd with a shotgun and two handguns as students dove to the floor and ran toward the exits. At least two of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition.

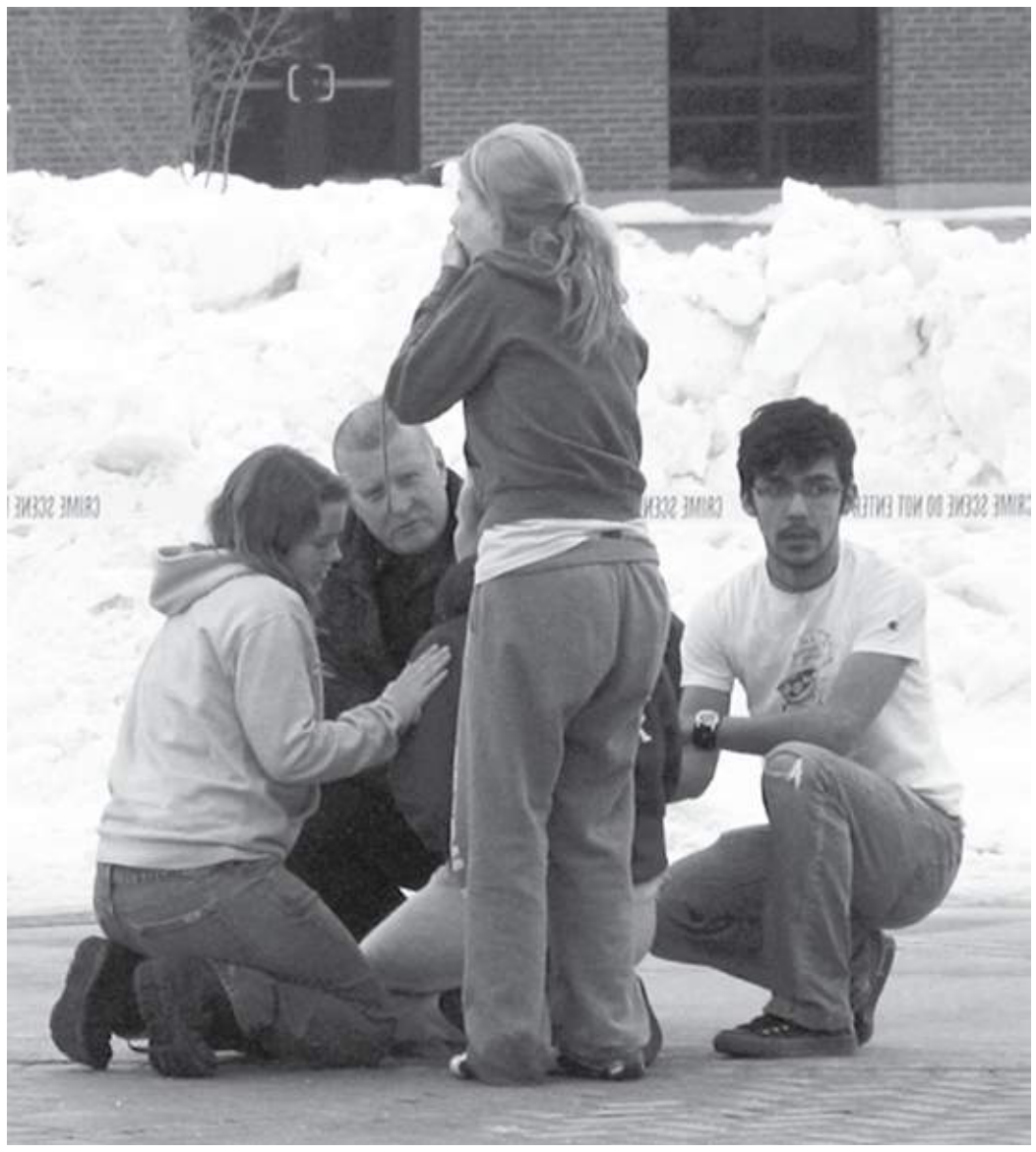
"I kept thinking, `Oh God, he's going to shoot me. Oh God, I'm dead. I'm dead. I'm dead,'" said Desiree Smith, a senior journalism major who dropped to the floor near the back of the auditorium.

"People were crawling on each other, trampling each other," she said. "As I got near the door, I got up and I started running."

University President John Peters said four people died at the scene, including three students and the gunman, while the other two died at a hospital. The teacher, a graduate student, was wounded but was expected to recover.

Peters said the gunman was a former graduate student in sociology at NIU, but was not currently enrolled at the 25,000-student campus about 65 miles west of Chicago.

"It appears he may have been a student somewhere else," University Police Chief Donald Grady said. Authorities did not release any other details about the gunman or identify the victims.



AP

In this photo provided by the student-run Northern Star newspaper, students are tended to outside of Cole Hall at Northern Illinois University after a shooting at the college Thursday, Feb. 14, 2008.

Witnesses said the skinny gunman, dressed in black and wearing a stocking cap, emerged from behind a screen on the stage of 200-seat Cole Hall and opened fire just as the class was about to end around 3 p.m.

Officials said 162 students were registered for the class but it was unknown how many were there Thursday.

Lauren Carr said she was sitting in the third row when she saw the shooter walk through a door on the right-hand side of the stage, pointing a gun straight ahead.

"I personally Army-crawled halfway up the aisle," said Carr, a 20-year-old sophomore. "I said I could get up and run or I could die here."

She said a student in front of her was bleeding, "but he just kept running."

"I heard this girl scream, 'Run, he's reloading the gun!'"

Student Jerry Santoni was in a back row when he saw the gunman enter a service door to the stage.

"I saw him shoot one round at the teacher," he said. "After that, I proceeded to get down as fast as I could."

Santoni dived down, hitting his head the seat in front of him, leaving a knot about half the size of a pingpong ball on his forehead.

Eighteen victims were brought to Kishwaukee Community Hospital, where one died, according to the hospital's Web site. One male was transferred in critical condition and died at OSF St. Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, an official said.

Dan Parmenter, a 20-year-old sophomore from Elmhurst, Ill., was one of those killed, his stepfather, Robert Greer, told the Chicago Tribune.

US to try to shoot down spy satellite

WASHINGTON (AP)—Taking a page from Hollywood science fiction, the Pentagon said Thursday it will try to shoot down a dying, bus-size U.S. spy satellite loaded with toxic fuel on a collision course with the Earth.

The military hopes to smash the satellite as soon as next week—just before it enters Earth's atmosphere—with a single missile fired from a Navy cruiser in the northern Pacific Ocean.

The dramatic maneuver may well trigger international concerns, and U.S. officials have begun notifying other countries of the plan—stressing that it does not signal the start of a new American anti-satellite weapons program.

Military and administration officials said the satellite is carrying fuel called hydrazine that could injure or even kill people who are near it when it hits the ground. That reason alone, they said, persuaded President Bush to order the shoot-down.

"That is the only thing that breaks it out, that is worthy of taking extraordinary measures," said Gen. James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a Pentagon briefing.

Black lawmakers rethink Clinton support

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a fresh sign of trouble for Hillary Rodham Clinton, one of the former first lady's congressional black supporters intends to vote for Barack Obama at the Democratic National Convention, and a second, more prominent lawmaker is openly discussing a possible switch.

Rep. David Scott's defection and Rep. John Lewis' remarks highlight one of the challenges confronting Clinton in a campaign that pits a black man against a woman for a nomination that historically has been the exclusive property of white men.

"You've got to represent the wishes of your constituency," Scott said in an interview Wednesday in the Capitol. "My proper position would be to vote the wishes of my constituents." The third-term lawmaker represents a district that gave more than 80 percent of its vote to Obama in the Feb. 5 Georgia primary.

Lewis, whose Atlanta-area district voted 3-to-1 for Obama, said he is not ready to abandon his backing for the former first lady. But several associates said the nationally known civil rights figure has become increasingly torn about his early endorsement of Clinton. They spoke on condition of anonymity, citing private conversations.

In an interview, Lewis likened Obama to Robert F. Kennedy in his ability to generate campaign excitement, and left open the possibility he might swing behind the Illinois senator. "It could (happen). There's no question about it. It could happen with a lot of people ... we can count and we see the clock," he said.

Clinton's recent string of eight primary and caucus defeats coincides with an evident shift in momentum in the contest for support from party officials who will attend the convention. The former first lady still holds a sizable lead among the roughly 800 so-called superdelegates, who are chosen outside the primary and caucus system.

But Christine Samuels, until this week a Clinton superdelegate from New Jersey, said during the day she is now supporting Obama.

Two other superdelegates, Sophie Masloff of Pennsylvania and Nancy Larson of Minnesota, are uncommitted, having dropped their earlier endorsements of Clinton.

Powerful union expected to endorse Obama

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sen. Barack Obama is expected to be endorsed Friday by the Service Employees International Union, one of the nation's most powerful, union officials have told The Associated Press.

The sought-after endorsement would be Obama's largest from organized labor, and give him a powerful boost against rival Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in the March 4 presidential primaries in Ohio and Texas.

The 1.8 million-member union is likely to endorse Obama on Friday, the union officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

SEIU backing is one of the most important labor endorsements available. The organization has donated more than $25 million, mostly to Democratic candidates, since 1989. In addition, the union has a powerful get-out-the-vote structure and has been courted by all the Democratic candidates since the beginning of the race.

SEIU has delayed an endorsement since September, when it had Obama, Clinton and other Democratic candidates speak to its members in Washington. It eventually narrowed the field to Obama, Clinton and former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, but could not make a decision.

The union allowed its state affiliates to make endorsements, and many backed Edwards.

Edwards dropped out of the race just before the Super Tuesday primaries and caucuses on Feb. 5, leaving the field to Obama and Clinton.

Union leaders decided after a conference call Thursday night to go with Obama.

The officials who spoke anonymously cautioned that the union was still voting, but Obama was "99 percent" likely to get the endorsement, one of the insiders said.

The union had announced earlier Thursday that "President Andy Stern and Secretary-Treasurer Anna Burger will discuss a major political announcement with reporters" on Friday.

Separately Thursday, Obama also won the backing of the United Food and Commercial Workers, a politically active union with significant membership in the upcoming Democratic battlegrounds.

The 1.3-million member UFCW has 69,000 members in Ohio and another 26,000 in Texas. The food workers also have 19,000 members in Wisconsin, which holds a primary Tuesday.

Man tied to windshield death sentenced

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—A motorist accused of hitting two pedestrians while driving drunk and making it home with one of them lodged in his windshield was sentenced Thursday to 15 years in prison.

Steven Warrichaiet, 40, of Green Bay, pleaded no contest in December to charges of homicide by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle, hit and run resulting in death, injury by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle and hit and run causing great bodily harm.

Authorities said he struck Tyrone Ware, 50, and Joann Carroll-Hildahl, 42, on the night of July 8 and then continued more than a mile to his home with Ware stuck in the windshield.

The criminal complaint said Warrichaiet parked in the garage, called his sister and fell asleep on the couch, then awoke six hours later, discovered Ware's body and called 911.

Carroll-Hildahl was left lying on the pavement after the accident. She is paralyzed and in a nursing home, said Henry Williams, Ware's half brother.

Asia

Musharraf warns vs poll protests

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—President Pervez Musharraf warned Thursday that he would not tolerate protests after next week's elections, a remark that drew a sharp reminder from Washington that Pakistanis have the right to demonstrate peacefully.

Opposition parties have threatened to launch street protests if they believe Monday's vote for parliament has been rigged. Although Musharraf is not up for reelection, he needs a commanding majority in the legislature to block any move to impeach him.

A senior official of slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's party said Friday his group would try to remove Musharraf if it wins the elections.

"The ouster of Musharraf will put Pakistan back on the track of real democracy," said Babar Awan, a member of the central executive council of the Pakistan People's Party.

"We will win if the elections are not massively rigged," he told The Associated Press.

Recent opinion surveys show support for Musharraf's ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Q fading and the opposition poised for a landslide victory. Opposition politicians fear the results will be manipulated in hopes of assuring the ruling party enough seats to block any impeachment.

During remarks to a seminar in the capital, Islamabad, Musharraf said that "despite all rumors, insinuations and every type of apprehension, these elections will be free, fair, transparent and peaceful."

"We don't know who is going to lose and who is going to win," he said, adding "there will be no rigging."

Leader of Myanmar rebel group killed

MAE SOT, Thailand (AP)—The leader of the Karen National Union, one of the biggest ethnic groups fighting Myanmar's military government, was killed Thursday in Thailand, police said.

KNU General Secretary Mahn Sha was shot at his home in Mae Sot by three men who arrived in a pickup truck, Thai police Col. Pasawat Tangjui said.

He said the killing may have been the result of internal differences in the rebel group.

The killing came less than a week after Myanmar's military government announced plans for referendum on a new constitution this May, followed by a general election in 2010. The plans have been denounced by the regime's opponents as a sham meant to perpetuate military rule.

The KNU is one of more than a dozen armed ethnic groups that for decades have sought greater autonomy from Myanmar's central government.

Many other groups have signed formal cease-fires with the ruling junta since 1988, but the Karen never reached a formal agreement to lay down their arms.

The KNU once had a powerful guerrilla army in Myanmar's eastern border region, but Myanmar army offensives, coupled with divisions within the organization, have reduced the guerrilla group's military presence considerably over the past decade.

Troops hunt rebels in East Timor hills

DILI, East Timor (AP) -- Foreign troops sealed off a mountain village outside the capital of tiny East Timor on Thursday in search of rebels implicated in attacks on the country's top two leaders. Two militants, meanwhile, were buried as heroes by more than a thousand supporters.

A procession of family and followers of slain rebel commander Alfredo Reinado wove through a poor seaside neighborhood in the capital of Dili ahead of his burial in his front yard. Throngs of people applauded, held joint Roman Catholic prayers and chanted, "Viva! Viva!"

Reinado and his bodyguard, who was buried alongside him, were shot dead Monday by a guard during an apparent assassination attempt against President Jose Ramos-Horta.

The president is recovering in a hospital in Australia after being shot twice outside his home and evacuated from East Timor in critical condition.

East Timor, a tiny former Portuguese colony of less than a million people, remained in a state of emergency Thursday after the latest violent crisis since it broke from Indonesia in 1999. In 2006, fighting between rival security forces and widespread civil unrest killed dozens. Reinado was wanted on murder charges for his role in the bloodshed that toppled the government.

ASIAN BRIEFS

11 dead in east China restaurant fire

BEIJING (AP)—A restaurant fire in eastern China early Friday killed 11 people and injured at least four others, a government news agency reported. Firefighters rescued 23 people from the Chengshuai Restaurant in Yiting Town of Zhejiang province, Xinhua News Agency said, citing local officials. Fifteen people were taken to hospitals, where 11 of them died.

4 Taliban killed in strikes

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) -- Airstrikes and a gunbattle involving U.S.-led coalition forces killed at least four suspected Taliban insurgents, the military and an Afghan official said Thursday. An operation in the Tarin Kowt area of Uruzgan province on Wednesday targeted a group of insurgents on motorcycles and killed "a number" of militants, the coalition said. Maj. Gulab, the chief of criminal investigations in Uruzgan, said four militants were killed and two were wounded in the airstrike. The coalition said troops searched compounds in Uruzgan associated with a Taliban leader they were seeking, and that "a number" of militants were killed by gunfire. Three militants were arrested.

US military in Japan weighs new curfews

TOKYO (AP)—The U.S. military in Japan has ordered a review of its anti-sexual assault guidelines and could impose new curfews or other restrictions following a Marine's arrest on suspicion of rape, the top commander said Thursday. The announcement came after U.S. Ambassador Thomas Schieffer traveled to the southern island of Okinawa on Wednesday in an effort to quell rising anger over the case, in which a Marine sergeant is accused of raping a 14-year-old girl. Japanese police on Monday arrested Staff Sgt. Tyrone Luther Hadnott from Camp Courtney in Okinawa over the alleged attack the night before. Hadnott has not been charged and his hometown has not been released.

India: Militants abducting recruits

GAUHATI, India (AP)—A separatist group in India's remote northeast has been forcibly recruiting people and taking them to camps in neighboring Myanmar for military training, Indian police said Thursday. The group, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, which has been fighting for a separate homeland for the Naga people, denied the accusation, saying the recruits joined the organization voluntarily. State police Chief D. Kumar said the rebels took 51 people between the ages of 12 and 24 last month in Arunachal Pradesh state and sent demands to villagers for more than 200 more. Kumar said the rebels later released the younger children and some others escaped. He said they are still holding 23 of the 51 people.

World

Chad leader declares a state of emergency

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP) -- Chad's president declared a nationwide state of emergency Thursday, telling citizens that tightened controls are needed to restore order after recent rebel attacks.

In a speech broadcast on national radio and television, President Idriss Deby said he signed a decree increasing the government's powers for 15 days, beginning Friday, as provided for in Chad's constitution.

Deby said the decree instituted "measures important and urgent to maintain order, guarantee stability and assure the good functioning of the state."

Forces loyal to Deby battled rebels Feb. 2-3 in and around the capital of this former French colony in Central Africa.

The Red Cross said more than 160 people were killed and 1,000 wounded in the fighting, which reached the edge of the presidential palace before the rebels were driven out of N'Djamena and back toward Chad's eastern border with Sudan.

Deby's decree, which was read on the broadcast, said that as of Friday there will be "a state of emergency throughout the territory of the Republic of Chad."

The measure empowers regional governors to control the movement of people and vehicles, bans most meetings, allows the government to control what is published in the press, and imposes a curfew from midnight to 6 a.m.

Hezbollah chief threatens Israel

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Israel ordered its embassies on high alert and the FBI put U.S. terror squads on guard to protect Jewish institutions after Hezbollah's leader vowed Thursday to retaliate anywhere in the world for the assassination of one of its top commanders.

"Zionists, if you want this kind of open war, let the whole world listen: Let this war be open," Hassan Nasrallah told a throng of fist-waving mourners who attended the funeral of Imad Mughniyeh, the mastermind of terror spectaculars that claimed hundreds of American lives.

Thousands of black-clad mourners raised their fists in the air, chanting, "At your orders, Nasrallah" in response to Nasrallah, who appeared via video. He has been in hiding since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon.

Nasrallah's fiery speech signaled the Iranian-backed Shiite group was ending a yearslong policy of battling Israel only on Israeli or Lebanese territory, raising the specter of attacks in Western or other countries.

Hezbollah and its Iranian backers blamed Israel for Mughniyeh's death in a car bombing Tuesday in Damascus, the Syrian capital. Israel denied involvement.

AP

Lebanese pro-government supporters walk in a street leading to the Martyrs' Square as they gather in downtown Beirut to mark the third anniversary of Rafik Hariri's assassination, Lebanon Thursday, Feb. 14, 2008.

UN urged to oppose Kosovo independence

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Serbia's foreign minister urged the U.N. Security Council on Thursday to oppose Kosovo's expected declaration of independence and called on the secretary-general to order that any proclamation be declared null and void.

In his address to a closed council meeting, Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic warned that independence for Kosovo would set a precedent that will echo around the globe, leading to "an uncontrolled cascade of secession."

Jeremic said Serbia does not believe that negotiations over the future status of the Serb province are exhausted, as the U.S. and many European nations maintain.

Iran shuts down 5 Web sites

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iranian authorities banned five Web sites that comment on current events for "poisoning" public opinion ahead of the crucial mid-March parliamentary elections, the state radio reported on Thursday.

The move is the latest in an election period which has seen the Interior Ministry, run by hard-liners close to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, disqualify more than 2,000 prospective candidates - most of them reformers.

About 280 of those candidates were reinstated Tuesday by the Guardian Council, Iran's hardline constitutional watchdog. But reformists have complained the reversal was insufficient to ensure a fair election.

In the past, the authorities have occasionally closed down some of the hundreds of private Web sites that comment on Iranian news and politics. But this was the first time they closed down five at once - a reflection of growing tension ahead of the vote.

Maharlika – PinoyNews

Assassination plot vs GMA bared

By PAUL ALEXANDER
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Officials divulged alleged plots to assassinate Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and bomb foreign embassies, just as opposition leaders were rallying supporters for fresh protests urging the unpopular leader to resign.

Brig. Gen. Romeo Prestoza, head of the Presidential Security Group, said the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group and its allies were behind the plans.

Details were scant, sparking criticism the government was using scare tactics to curtail a planned anti-Arroyo demonstration Friday in Makati, Manila's financial district, and a prayer rally involving the influential Roman Catholic church Sunday that will be led by former president and pro-democracy icon Corazon Aquino.

Arroyo, a staunch U.S. ally plagued by long-running Islamic and communist insurgencies, has lurched from crisis to crisis since taking over in the country's second "people power" revolt in 2001, fending off three impeachment bids and four coup plots. She has two years left in her term.

Her latest challenge intensified last week when former government consultant Rodolfo Lozada Jr. linked an ex-elections chief and Arroyo's husband to an allegedly overpriced US$330 million (€225 million) government broadband contract—a contract the president has canceled. Both men have denied the allegations, and Arroyo has not spoken directly about her husband's alleged involvement.

Officials already had announced security forces were going on high alert on concerns that communist rebels planned to infiltrate Friday's protests by leftist groups. An armored army company was being brought into the capital while checkpoints were being set up at key points across Manila.

Military spokesman Capt. Carlo Ferrer said intelligence reports indicated the rebels planned "to create confusion and chaos." The rebels vowed to intensify attacks to weaken the government, but they have largely refrained from assaults that could hurt civilians during their four-decade insurgency.

Military chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the assassination plot allegedly involved a sniper ready to attack when an opportunity arises.

Arroyo's planned visit to the Philippines' premier military academy this weekend in the northern city of Baguio was canceled, and her remaining schedule was "under assessment," said Prestoza.

He said police uncovered the assassination plot last week, adding, "It's not only the president who is the target, but also other people ... and embassies."

Renato Reyes, one of the organizers of Friday's protests, scoffed at the allegations.

"Obviously this is a very desperate tactic to create an atmosphere of terror and scare people to prevent them from joining the protest actions," he said.

Esperon denied that.

"We are simply acting as security forces and so we have deemed it necessary that we come out in the open about our assessment of the situation," Esperon said.

A police counterterrorism officer said a captured Abu Sayyaf member told investigators late last year that his comrades, working with Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah and Manila-based Filipino Islamic converts, plotted a bomb attack in Baguio against unspecified targets that was believed to be scheduled for December.

AP

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, left, gestures during an open forum after addressing a business forum Friday Feb. 15, 2008 at the financial district of Makati city, east of Manila, Philippines where a massive protest is scheduled later to call for her resignation.

RP govt to offer OFWs $100M in retail bonds

By DORIS DUMLAO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

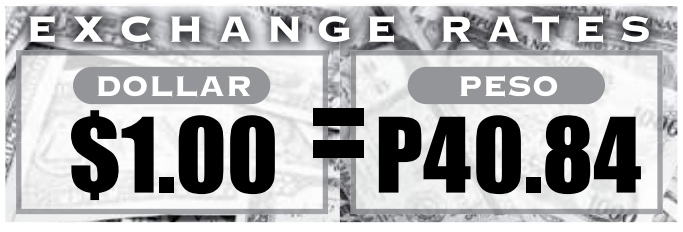
The government will soon offer overseas Filipino workers and their families an initial $100 million worth of retail Treasury bonds that may include a form of guarantee to protect their dollar earnings, said bankers privy to the issuance.

Top officials of the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines, which acts as an adviser to the government's OFW offering, along with British bank HSBC, said the 2.5-year, dollar-denominated T-bond offering with an annual yield of about 4 percent is currently being worked out.

The government hopes to issue the bonds in April.

OFWs and their beneficiaries may buy the retail Treasury bonds for a minimum investment of $500 once they have shown proof that they are working abroad or that they belong to an OFW-supported household.

To address widespread concerns about the US dollar's downtrend against the peso, they said the offering would be structured in such a way that would give a foreign exchange cover to OFWs. This means that the OFWs may be given an exchange rate guarantee so their RTB investments will not be diluted if the peso further strengthens against the US dollar.



"Without a hedge, it's easier, but that (forex guarantee) is what the OFWs are asking for," Landbank president Gilda Pico said in a briefing Tuesday night.

"It's something like a guarantee that, at the end of the term, you're protected from exchange rate [risk]," Land Bank executive vice president Alfonso Cruz Jr. said. "For example, if [the guarantee is set at) 38 to the dollar, even if [the peso] goes down to 30, we'll still give 38."

Cruz said the financial mechanics on this hedging component are still being discussed. Also, the Bureau of Treasury is still reluctant to shoulder the cost of the foreign exchange cover.

But even if the Bureau of the Treasury decides not to assume the proposed hedging mechanism with finality, Cruz said, the underwriters may find a way to structure the RTBs to provide forex risk cover to investing OFWs.

Cruz said the 4.0 percent proposed yield would be a "good" rate for a dollar-denominated investment instrument, as this is comparable to the yield currently offered by Philippine banks' foreign currency deposit units (FCDUs) to high-net-worth depositors with large volumes of FCDU deposits.

"And it's not only the four percent [yield]," Land Bank treasurer Reevie Vergara added. "Together with the purchase of interest-bearing instrument, we are attempting to give them a hedge to the exchange rate [volatility] upon maturity."

? LABOR FRONT

Fulfilling the periodic exit requirement

By FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: An alien worker is either entering a renewal of his or her employment contract or transferring to a new employer. Does that worker fulfill the periodic exit requirement by going back to his or her home country while awaiting processing of his or her papers at the Department of Labor?

A: A guest worker who is proceeding with a renewal or transfer may sign a contract and undergo a health examination while on-island and then fulfill the periodic exit requirement by exiting until their documents are processed.

According to the new Employment Rules and Regulations, under circumstances of a transfer, the alien worker may claim the 60-day equivalent exit if available under the entitlement of the former or new employer.

■ ■ ■

Q: What will happen to the employment contract if the alien worker exits during the term of his or her contract?

A: An employer may employ a foreign national worker in his or her former job after the periodic exit has been completed. The new Employment Rules and Regulations states that if the guest worker exits during the term of an employment contract, that contract may be automatically extended, without fee, by the six month or 60-day period that the worker exited.

If the worker exits at the end of a contract term, that contract may be renewed, without fee, substituting the termination date of the periodic exit for the termination date of the contract.

■ ■ ■

Q: Can an employer make adjustments of an alien worker's contract to accommodate periodic exit?

A: According to the new Employment Rules and Regulations, under circumstances in which a foreign national worker has completed a one-year contract, and the employer plans to renew the employee but wishes to schedule the worker for a six-month periodic exit, the employer may enter into an employment contract with the employee for six months at half the cost of the application fee. The employer can then process the necessary documents while the worker is completing the exit period, and re-start the employee again under a one-year contract at the end of the periodic exit.

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POEA suspends memo on $5,000 repatriation bond for employers

By VERONICA UY
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA—The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has suspended a circular requiring employers to pay a $5,000 repatriation bond and direct-hire Filipino workers to post a performance bond equal to three months' pay.

Memorandum Circular (MC) 04, series of 2007, was suspended after a directive from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, POEA Administrator Rosalinda Baldoz said.

In a phone interview, Baldoz told INQUIRER.net the suspension will remain in effect pending discussions by the POEA governing board on Monday.

The suspension means direct-hires will be processed under POEA rules in effect before MC 04 was issued.

MC 04 received a lot of flak from overseas Filipino workers' (OFWs) organizations and advocacy groups when it took effect January 16 this year.

The OFWs complained the additional requirements would either be passed on to them by their employers or make them unattractive to employers abroad.

ZTE Corp. denies role in NBN scandal

By HRVOJE HRANJSKI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—China's leading telecommunications company warned Friday that a brewing corruption scandal linking it to an allegedly overpriced deal and kickbacks in the Philippines could affect economic cooperation between the two countries.

ZTE Corp. issued a statement denying allegations by witnesses testifying in a Philippine Senate anti-corruption hearing that a former elections chief and President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's husband were promised huge commissions to clear a national broadband contract with the Chinese company.

Both men have denied the accusations, and the deal was scrapped last year. But the scandal and nationally televised hearings have continued, threatening Arroyo's administration with fresh opposition protests and coup rumors.

ZTE spokesman Howard Xue said the company "cannot allow itself to be dragged into any political circus" and ruled out an appearance at the Senate hearing.

"ZTE has neither done anything wrong, nor has it bribed anyone to get this project," he said.

"This episode certainly brings unforeseeable negative influence on bilateral economic cooperation between China and Philippines," the statement said, noting that China has overtaken the U.S. as the Philippines' biggest trade partner.

Arroyo said Friday she took the issue "very seriously" and canceled the project "as soon as I could, after proper consultation with the government of China."

"We want to fight corruption," she told a business forum, while criticizing the opposition for riding on the controversy "as part of our less than impressive political culture."

Last year, a Filipino businessman who lost to ZTE the bid for the project to link online all government offices told senators the US$330 million (€225 million) ZTE proposal was overpriced by US$130 million (€89 million) to accommodate kickbacks demanded by ex-elections commissioner Benjamin Abalos and the president's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri testified that Abalos offered him a bribe to approve the ZTE proposal, which he refused. Neri stopped short of linking Arroyo or her husband to the scandal.

Last week, Neri's former consultant, Rodolfo Lozada Jr., surfaced in the Senate after claiming he was held for two days by government agents to prevent him from speaking.

4 missing as cargo boat capsizes in RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A cargo boat loaded with beer capsized in stormy weather in the eastern Philippines, leaving four of its 19 crew missing, the coast guard said Friday.

The MV Don Wilfredo capsized after it was battered by high winds and big waves off Bulusan town late Thursday, according to a coast guard report.

Fishermen and police rescued 15 of the crew, including one who was swept about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away from the boat in waters 400 kilometers (250 miles) southeast of Manila, said Olympia Cedeno of the coast guard station in Sorsogon city, near Bulusan.

The boat was carrying beer from central Cebu city on a 2-1/2 day trip to Legazpi city, northwest of Sorsogon, according to Tessie Flores, operations officer of ship owner Candano Shipping Lines.

The vessel had taken shelter close to nearby Samar island but continued on to Legazpi when the weather cleared early Thursday. The captain said he encountered strong winds and waves in the afternoon, Flores said.

She said the captain reported all crew members were wearing life vests.

US senators debate Filipino veterans' pension measure

By AUDREY McAVOY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HONOLULU (AP)—U.S. senators sparred over whether to pay long-promised pension benefits to Filipinos who fought for the U.S. in World War II.

Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel Akaka, a Democrat from Hawaii, has sponsored a measure that would provide Filipino veterans with the pension benefits they were promised when they joined the war effort. Congress took away the benefit in 1946.

Filipinos fought against Japan during World War II under the U.S. flag as part of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. The U.S., which controlled the Philippines as a commonwealth at the time, was responsible for Philippine foreign affairs and national defense.

"These veterans have been denied these benefits for over 50 years. I believe it is time to give these elderly veterans the benefits that they earned and so richly deserve," Akaka said in a speech on the Senate floor.

The pension provision, which would cost about $24 million in its first year, is included in a broader bill called the Veterans Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007 that passed the committee in June. It still hasn't come up for a full Senate vote.

But the ranking Republican on the U.S. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee said providing pension benefits to Filipino veterans is the wrong priority at the wrong time because the U.S. is now at war.

Sen. Richard Burr told lawmakers Thursday that the government should focus on the needs of U.S. citizens and those injured in battle.

AP

Protesters display a banner calling for "People Power" to oust President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during a rally Thursday, Feb. 14, 2008, in Manila, Philippines. The text on the banner reads "It's still People Power! Oust Gloria!"

Calls mounting for Arroyo, Neri, Atienza to quit

By DAXIM LUCAS, TJ BURGONIO, BEVERLY T. NATIVIDAD
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—From the skyscrapers of Makati and the parliament of the streets, to the groves of academe, even in police stations and military camps, calls are mounting for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Commission on Higher Education Chair Romulo Neri, Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon Jr. and Environment Secretary Lito Atienza. Or, all of the above.

Another influential business group Thursday added its voice to the swelling criticism against the administration, asking rhetorically if the time is right for Filipinos to ask Ms Arroyo to step down.

In a statement, the Management Association of the Philippines said it was "compelled to speak out in the face of the frequency of corruption cases and scandals that have been growing in scope and intensity."

Its statement comes two days after the Makati Business Club—an organization with which MAP shares many business personalities as members—expressed its support for whistle-blower Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. and called on Atienza and Neri to step down for allegedly trying to obstruct Lozada's exposé on the scrapped $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp.

The scams and controversies under the Arroyo administration outlined by the MAP were the Joc-joc Bolante fertilizer scam, the General Garcia case, the Jose Pidal scandal, the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, the North and South Rail projects and the "Hello Garci" tape.

The MAP also cited the reported "shameless" distribution of cash gifts to lawmakers and governors in Malacañang, the questionable procurement of textbooks for public schools and of helicopters by the Department of Defense and of X-ray machines by the Bureau of Customs, the Commission on Elections' MegaPacific computer deal, and now the "scandalously overpriced" NBN-ZTE deal.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Cebu Pacific offers direct Manila-Vietnam flights

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—Cebu Pacific Air of the Philippines will start offering daily service to Vietnam to meet increasing travel demand between the two countries, an official said Thursday. The Philippine budget airlines will offer four flights a week starting April 1 between Manila and Vietnam's southern commercial hub of Ho Chi Minh City, and three flights a week from the Philippine capital to Hanoi, said Vo Cuong of the Civil Aviation Administration of Vietnam. The budget airlines will use Airbus A319, A320 and A321 planes for the new routes, he said. Currently, Philippines Airlines offers daily flights between Manila and Ho Chi Minh City. Vietnam Airlines suspended its Manila-Ho Chi Minh City route in 1997 as a result of the Asian financial crisis.

Arroyo to back calls for charter change

MANILA—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will not initiate moves to rewrite the Constitution, but will support such an initiative, especially if it would be aimed at electoral reforms. "It is not really for me anymore to initiate constitutional reform, but if there are others who will do it, I will support them," Arroyo said during the Philippine Economic Forum in Makati City on Friday. "One reform we need to make is reform of our political system," she said. The President acknowledged that the country's political system was "something that needs to be reformed more than the economy."

Earlier this week, the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported that local government officials were pushing for a shift to the federal form of government—a move seen by government critics as a ploy to keep incumbent officials, including the President, beyond the expiration of their terms in 2010. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

They're not pregnant

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

CEBU CITY—Singer-songwriter-TV host Ogie Alcasid, one of three judges in GMA 7's "Pinoy Idol," is fast being cast as the counterpart of "American Idol's" Paula Abdul.

Could be because he's also known as Mr. Nice, with sensitivity to spare.

"Mababaw ang luha" (quick to tears) is how fellow "Idol" judge Wyngard Tracy jokingly describes him after a blind contestant recently made Ogie cry, never mind that everyone else in the room followed suit—including Wyngard.

Ogie Alcasid

The talent show's director Louie Ignacio is quick to point out, however, that Ogie also has "maldita [catty] moments."

It's all just a matter of being truthful, Alcasid told Inquirer Entertainment in an exclusive interview at the Crown Regency hotel here.

Speaking of honesty, he can now talk about being deluged with negative publicity after his admission of his romance with singer Regine Velasquez.

The pair is again the subject of many chismis columns. The new issues: Regine is pregnant and so they're tying the knot soon; and his marriage to beauty queen Michelle van Eimeren has been annulled.

Mr. Nice (also Mr. Straightforward here) hardly blinks during this exchange.

Do you think, in a way, that you were touched by that blind girl's audition because you're doing a movie called "Love is Blind and Deaf" with Regine Velasquez?

That's possible. Strangely, I just got an invitation from the Deaf Society of the Philippines, inviting me to sing in a show they're putting together. I've heard a lot of real love stories between the deaf and the blind.

The latest rumor is that Regine is expecting.

No, she's not (laughs). Our "baby" is George (a 2-year-old Shih Tzu). When Regine is sad or stressed, only George can make her happy. Not even I can do that (laughs)! It's amazing. Michelle left her poodle Wiwi with me.

Wiwi is a very loyal dog. And old—13 na siya. His partner Whoopi has passed away. Wiwi looks frail nga e. Regine also gave me a big Labrador named Poochie.

Has your marriage really been annulled, as rumored?

I can't discuss that— lawyer's advice. Also, it's not right for one [who's petitioning for an annulment] to talk about it in the media, or to presume that it's going to be approved.

How did you handle the backlash after you admitted your relationship with Regine?

You just have to take it in stride. Face the music. In the end, what counts is the truth.

Everyone has his or her opinion. Some people were upset, but others were happy.

To those who are offended by the fact that we're [affectionate in public]... we're now trying to temper that. I can understand where they're coming from.

You're reportedly building a dream house together?

She's the one building— it's her house. We have to [iron out] so many things before we can settle down.

What are your immediate plans then?

I'm going to Bangkok for a show next week. I plan to take Regine along, for a post-Valentine treat. What she [really] wants is to spend her birthday [in April] in Spain. Last year, we celebrated in Batangas, with her entire family. Maybe I'll take her to Spain someday.

Method in the madness

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

CEBU CITY, Philippines—The fourth stop in the search for GMA 7's first "Pinoy Idol" took an 80-man production contingent to this Queen City of the South.

Host Raymond Gutierrez pointed out to Inquirer Entertainment that this Visayan island had produced "great singers," among them Pilita Corrales, Dulce and Verni Varga.

Still, Perry Lansigan, executive producer, was "surprised" by the turnout. Long lines of starry-eyed aspirants gathered in SM Cebu on the first two days of the three-day tryouts which wrapped up Saturday last weekend.

Largest so far

"This is the largest crowd we've had so far," Lansigan said. (Previous stops were Cagayan de Oro, Batangas and Iloilo.)

On Thursday, program manager Hazel Abonita estimated they would be seeing 1,400 to 1,500 contestants. "We have to extend pre-casting (screening) to accommodate everyone."

Mercifully, Abonita noted, the "Idol" audition process had been fine-tuned by Fremantle-Media, franchise holder of the world-famous reality show.

There's now a little method in the madness.

Abonita explained: "Freemantle provided us with a computer software that was developed in Indonesia. With this program, all levels of the entire audition process are linked through the computers in each work station."

"If a production staffer wanted to verify the background story of a specific contestant, all they have to do is check their laptops," Abonita said.

Three phases

Before contestants can even stand in front of the three judges— Wyngard Tracy, Ogie Alcasid and Jolina Magdangal— for assessment, they have to go through phases: registration, pre-casting and results.

For each city-stop, the Kapuso network sends a team of at least 80 production people from Manila — equipped with 10 laptop computers and 8 cameras.

"The team is divided into five dockable units," Abonita said.

"We have the same team in the different auditions so that we don't have to retrain fresh recruits every time," said Paolo Luciano, associate producer.

Constant motion

The cameras, especially four units placed in the final judging room, are constantly rolling.

"We want to make sure everything that happens is captured on tape," said Magdangal.

That's every note, every quip, every smirk, every gasp.

"If a segment producer notices that a certain candidate has an interesting story, a cameraman would follow him or her from pre-casting to final judgment," Abonita said.

Ubiquitous sign

Unmistakable was the tarpaulin sign posted on the wall of the holding room at the audition venue: "If you don't want to be seen on TV, leave the area." In fact, everyone who registers for the tryouts signs a waiver allowing the show to air footage —in any way, shape or form.

The Fremantle software also prevents a rejected aspirant or a contestant from auditioning more than once in the same venue. On other shows, enterprising rejects have been known to change clothes and hairstyle, just so they can rejoin the cattle call.

Happy to oblige

But everyone in the winding queues at SM Cebu was only too happy to be seen on TV.

Random selections made by production staffers in the crowd yielded aspirants who belted out their audition songs, and then some, at the drop of a hat.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Is it time to play safe in investing?

Question: With the stock market going down, and with the US economy expected to go into recession, should I play safe now and move my investments from UITFs and mutual funds to time deposits?—Minda

Answer: Global financial markets have been off to a challenging start in 2008. Stock indices around the world have declined significantly since the start of the year as global investors seem to fear contagion of credit problems and recessionary conditions.

The current volatility stems from fears of a full-blown US recession. Specifically, there are beginning signs that economic weakness may be spreading to consumption spending and consumer credit. A US recession may lead to a significant slowdown in global economic growth as the US comprises about 25 percent of the world's economic activity.

In response, jittery investors have also been pulling out investments in the local stock market, and that is why the market has gone down.

So is it time to play safe and shift to more conservative investments?

The basics of investing

Before we get to that, let's talk first about why one should invest at all in the first place.

People should invest their savings to grow their money more to meet their financial goals in the future. These financial goals may be college tuition for one's child, a home, or a comfortable lifestyle at retirement.

There are investments that earn a little, but are generally steady. Included in this group are savings accounts, interest-bearing checking accounts, and time deposits. There is very little risk since you are assured of getting back your principal and interest in the future, unless the bank folds up. In that case, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will give you back your money up to P250,000, the mandated maximum insurance coverage per depositor.

And then there are the investments that may earn more, but will put your investment at a "medium" risk. Bonds and bond funds in both mutual funds and unit investment trust funds (UITFs) fall into this category. You will earn a higher interest rate than that offered by bank deposits. But the risk is that if the bond issuer defaults on payments, then you won't be able to recover your investment. The trick is to pick the bonds well—just go by the rating given by financial agencies. Bond funds are managed by professionals, which offers some assurance these funds will have a good mix of bonds.

Investments that may potentially earn the highest yield come with the highest risk: stocks, also called equities. Depending on the market, stock prices may rise high, even more than 100 percent, especially in the case of stocks offered on initial public offering. Or they may lose also, and there are no limits as to how low stocks can go. As they say, you may even lose your shirt.

A good mix: deciding on an investment strategy

Because we don't need all our money immediately, we have to have some investments for the long term. This will fund financial goals that are not immediate, such as retirement.

For the rest of your money, keep them in investments for the short or medium term.

Bank deposits and money market placements are best places to park cash that you will need in the short term, e.g., one year. You will earn a steady interest income stream from these investments.

Bonds and bond funds are marketed as medium-term investments. Stocks, on the other hand, are best kept as long-term investments. This is because stocks are very volatile; their prices change every day in the stock market. But if you hold your stock investments for the long term, you will be able to ride out market fluctuations and possibly earn a lot after a number of years.

Every person has a unique financial situation. Our needs differ from each other. Likewise, our aversion or attraction to risk depends much on our personality. To find the best investment mix, a person needs to consider all these. One should only go into an investment if he is comfortable with it and if he feels it will help him meet his financial goals. Those who need help deciding may want to talk to a financial counselor.

Ride with the times or play safe?

Now as to your question, should you play safe now and move your investments in pooled funds into the safer time deposits?

It all depends on your needs and goals. If your needs are for the long term, you may want to consider holding on to your investments in mutual funds and UITFs which may both invest in bonds alone, stocks alone, or a combination of both. This is because equities have been identified as the best performing asset for the long term. The market will improve in the future—we just don't know when.

Now if you have needs such as your child's college tuition and if you put your fund for this in the pooled funds, you may or may not move your investments to a safer alternative. It depends on how much time you have left until you need the cash. If your child is going to college in a year or two, then it may be best to go for the safer investments, after taking into account if you'll have enough by then given the lower interest rate given by time deposits.

The best strategy though, is to diversify your investments. Put money in bank deposits, bond funds and stock funds. Protect your assets by not putting all your eggs in one basket. Then, as your need arises, rebalance your investment portfolio and move your cash from one kind of investment to another.

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Maharlika – Opinyon

EDITORIAL

Checkmated bishops

Now that Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr. has pried fully open the can of worms that is the ZTE national broadband network deal, it should be clear to everyone that the whole thing is not a lone, sordid attempt at wholesale corruption by the highest authorities in government. Even worse, that it has turned into another episode in the otherwise ambitious but notorious attempt by the administration to undermine constitutional democracy, which started with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's highly dubious election in 2004. What should people of conscience do?

If there's any sector that should have the intellectual sophistication and moral conviction to make clear to the populace what should be done, it should be the Catholic bishops.

But what do we hear from the bishops? Right after nuns and other religious bravely shielded Lozada from the talons of the state, all that the bishops did was to hail Lozada, saying he could save the government from "scandalous and immoral kickbacks." Could there be anything more lame and shallow than that? By now the bishops should have appreciated that the ZTE issue, more than just another instance of corruption, is an episode in a vast tapestry of abuse of power, constitutional deception and subversion—a stark evil right in the corridors of power.

But still the bishops hem and haw, even deny they have the duty to lead the people. An instance of this is Bishop Francisco Claver's revisionism of Jaime Cardinal Sin, the bishops and people power. He wrote in a commentary on Feb. 13 in this section: "[Cardinal Sin] wasn't the real decision-maker for [the] occurrence [of EDSA People Power I and II] ... the real kingmakers are not the bishops but the people."

Claver's argument is platitudinous, if not misplaced. It overlooks the fact that in the long dark years of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, it was Sin who boldly spoke out against the strongman and his depredations, even without the people visibly or resonantly protesting. EDSA People Power I came to pass because of the activism of Sin and later, of the bishops, who kneaded the critical mass. The people may not be marching in the streets now, but it is because they're waiting for the clarion call of our bishops.

But the bishops seem to have jettisoned their moral and pastoral duty. They've become spiritual and moral illiterates. They seem unable to read the signs of the times. Perhaps checkmated by their own prudence and discretion, they're now inspired less by the Holy Spirit and more by moral stasis. Worse, they seem to have made themselves a party to the grand constitutional larceny. Perhaps Lozada was referring to them when he quoted St. Thomas Aquinas freely, "The worst corruption is the corruption of the best."

2008 Philippine Daily Inquirer

Thank God for 'probinsyanong Intsiks'

THERE'S THE RUB

By CONRADO DE QUIROS
Philippine Daily Inquirer

Sergio Apostol used to be funny and vastly amusing. But there's something about joining the current administration that makes you stop being funny and vastly amusing and starts making you cruel and vastly insufferable. Still, there was no small amount of comedy of the vastly hilarious kind in his vituperations against Jun Lozada last week.

After Lozada had described himself as just a "probinsyanong Intsik" [provincial Chinese], Apostol frothed: "He says he is a Chinese from the province. 'Bagay sa iyo, i-deport ka. Magulo ka.'" ["You ought to be deported. You're a troublemaker."]

He has, of course, already apologized to the Chinese community after drawing angry protests from them. I don't know though why he hasn't apologized as well to "probinsyanos" [provincials], or indeed drawn an equally animated response from them. After all, he wasn't clear about whether he wanted Lozada to be deported for being Chinese or for being provincial.

But that's not the truly funny thing about it. What's so, and which sent me into fits of laughing when I saw him on TV uttering those words, is that if "probinsyanong Intsik" fitted anyone at all, it fitted Apostol more than Lozada! Apostol may have a Filipino surname and may be eligible to run for public office, but there is no mistaking Chinese blood runs copiously in his veins more than it does in most of us. He in fact looks more Chinese than Lozada.

As to "probinsyano," wasn't he the one who produced one glorious line during the Joseph Estrada trial, which was "Madame Wetness"? But I'll stop there lest I myself earn the ire of the proponents of a Visayan-speaking Mindanao Republic.

So when Apostol demanded that "probinsyanong Intsiks" who are "magulo" be deported, well, you feared for his continued sojourn hereabouts.

But thank God for "probinsyanong Intsiks"! I just came from Naga City to attend the 40th anniversary of our high school year last weekend, and never have Bicolanos been prouder than with what their fellow Bicolano (Lozada is from Albay) has done. Finally, Bicolanos could raise their heads again, they said, which was no small feat after Bicol had for some time worn the face of Luis Villafuerte, Edcel Lagman, and lately Joker Arroyo. The last, as our editorial pointed out, was a no-show last Friday at the Senate after thundering magnificently during Esrada's time, "We cannot have a nation run by a thief!" Finally Bicol has been rescued from the pits -- by a "probinsyanong Intsik."

But it's a triumph not just for Bicolanos but for "probinsyanos" in general. And an object lesson too for them. A great deal has been said about how imperial Manila can be made to serve the vassal countryside. A greater deal can be made about how the countryside can make imperial Manila its vassal. That is by conquering it spiritually if not physically. That is by compelling it to hark to the virtues probinsyanos are known for: simplicity, honesty, goodness of heart. Or a reasonable facsimile thereof: Lozada is no saint; thank God for that, too.

Just as well, maybe the Year of the Rat is truly the year of the Chinese as well. After the Chinese have worn the face of Donald Dee, most of them would be grateful to find themselves wearing the face of Jun Lozada. Not least aesthetically: Lozada has a far more agreeable one than the first. Lozada may have done more for the Chinese community in this country than all the officials of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry put together. Certainly, he has done wonders for the word "Intsik" which has tended to carry pejorative meanings in the past. I know some Chinese mind being called "Intsik," notwithstanding that that is the local word, and would rather be referred to by the English word, "Chinese" or the local word, "Tsino." Now, they can carry the epithet "Intsik" proudly, and defiantly, in the same way that people in the province can carry the epithet "probinsyano" proudly and defiantly.

All because a proud and defiant Chinese, like the rat that came at Buddha's bidding, ratted on crooks in government on New Year's Day in the Year of the Rat.

But more than for the "probinsyanos" and the "Intsiks," it's a triumph for Filipinos of all shapes and sizes. Who, after being driven to near-despair by a never-ending and deeply insulting spectacle of the triumph of evil, have been given to hope good might triumph in the end after all. I remember how in Robert Bolt's "A Man for All Seasons" Henry VIII's allies wanted to know why he was so insistent on winning over Thomas More when More was just one man and he, the king, had the support of archbishops and dukes alike, of Church and State alike. "Because he is an honest man," Henry replies. "And an honest man is the most dangerous enemy of all" (or words to that effect, I'm quoting from memory).

Lozada is by no means a Thomas More. He is by his own admission someone who did things he is now deeply ashamed of. But he is one who when the time came to give a reckoning of himself to earth's version of St. Peter, who are the people, rose from the ashes to live up to his father's demand that he be an honest man.

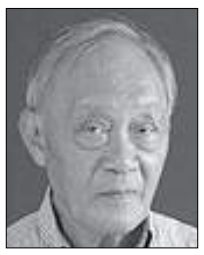
Maybe God works in truly mysterious ways, or maybe that's just the sublime way of things, miracles happening when you least expect it. In Tolkien's "Lord of the Ring," it wasn't the valiant king of men, the swift-footed prince of elves, the last remaining royal descendant of the dwarfs, or the powerful white wizard that put an end to the terrifying, impregnable, and seemingly interminable rule of evil Mordor. It was a most unlikely creature, a short, unimpressive, Hobbit named Frodo. Except that he would be courageous, pure of heart, and would have the power to resist the thoroughly corrupting influence of evil. What can one say?

Thank God for Hobbits. And thank God for "probinsyanong Intsiks."

Lozada and Quintero

ANALYSIS

By AMANDO DORONILA
Philippine Daily Inquirer



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration deployed the full force of the state's police powers on Rodolfo Noel Lozada Jr., key witness in the Senate inquiry into the $329-million national broadband contract, when the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sent an agent to his former office in search of documents which the government intends to use against him for corruption charges.

Lozada described the search conducted by NBI agent Marlon Tauli at Philippine Forest Corp. (Philfrest) in Taguig City as a "raid." "They opened my cabinets, they took out my personals stuff," Lozada said. "They were moving with lightning speed."

Allan Contado, chief of the NBI's anti-graft division, denied that the intervention was a raid. He said Tauli went to Philforest with a request for certified true copies of certain documents. He said, "it was not a raid, only one agent went there and he was even unarmed."

Contado admitted that the agent did not serve a search warrant. He claimed that Philforest was a government office and the NBI coordinated the search with Philforest officials.

The "request" was given to Philforest officials who then turned over the documents to agent Tauli. Contado said there were no orders from Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to search the office; he sent the agent on his own initiative. He said the NBI used the information it obtained from the Senate investigation as the basis for the "request," as part of the NBI's fact-finding and document-gathering efforts. "We secured copies of the documents so we could validate allegations of corruption against Lozada," he said.

The NBI was apparently overzealous in searching for documents on corruption by Lozada. And the one-sidedness of the NBI's initiative is pronounced by the fact that it is not taking any effort to search for evidence against officials and people close to the Palace, like former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos who, Lozada alleged at the Senate hearings, brokered the broadband contract with China's ZTE corporation and demanded kickbacks.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said government actions against Lozada would show there are no "sacred cows" in the government, given that Lozada was chief executive officer of Philforest, which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Lozada quit his post last week after he disclosed at an early-morning press conference -- and later testified at Senate hearings -- the alleged kickbacks and fat commissions sought by officials in the national broadband network (NBN) transaction with China's ZTE Corp., which the administration cancelled after it was embroiled in a corruption scandal.

The NBI's intervention represented the latest action mounted by the administration to demolish Lozada's credibility. Lozada said at the Senate inquiry that on Feb. 5, upon his return from Hong Kong, he was abducted at the international airport by a group of armed men, whom he identified as soldiers and police agents in civilian clothes, in an attempt to prevent him from testifying at the Senate hearings on the ZTE-NBN deal. He tagged his former boss, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Lito Atienza as the one who arranged his departure to London via Hong Kong for a Global Fuel Conference, which he could not have attended for lack of a United Kingdom visa.

His four abductors took him to a car for a trip of more than four hours to an unknown destination in Laguna, after which he was brought back to Manila to his family who had sought refuge at the La Salle Greenhills dormitory in Mandaluyong City.

The abduction has generated a more explosive issue than Lozada's testimony on the alleged kickbacks, because it involved high-handed abuse of police powers in an apparently well-coordinated conspiracy among government officials to cover up the ZTE scandal and to prevent Lozada from testifying.

The conspiracy has caused widespread public alarm over the abuse of police powers and has sparked calls from civil society groups for the resignation of President Arroyo; from the Catholic bishops, for "communal action" in search of the truth.

The NBI search has served to heighten public outrage over the broadband network scandal.

It recalls the raid staged by the NBI at the home of Eduardo Quintero, a delegate from Leyte province to the Constitutional Convention in 1972. On May 19, 1972, Quintero, a retired diplomat, dropped a bombshell when he denounced in a speech at the convention, that he had received P11,150 inside 18 envelopes on 18 different occasions, from people allegedly associated with Malacañang. He said they were given in an attempt to buy delegates to vote in favor of a constitutional amendment seeking the shift to the parliamentary system to allow President Ferdinand Marcos to extend his stay in power beyond 1973.

Day following his disclosure, NBI agents raided Quintero's home and seized a suitcase filled with P379,200 in cash. Marcos denounced Quintero furiously as a man "of moral depravity," and accused him of treason. Marcos vowed, "I will not rest until I have unmasked this pretender, his masterminds and his accomplices." Marcos harassed Quintero with prosecutions. The persecution drove Quintero to self-exile in the United States where, in December 1984, he died of heart attack at age 84. He was vindicated by the Supreme Court in 1988, four years after his death.

The process to discredit Lozada and to destroy his credibility by prosecuting him for alleged corruption has started with the same vicious ruthlessness applied by Marcos to Quintero. Lozada has no chance.

Maharlika – Samu't Sari

CIVICS LESSON CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI's first governor, Dr. Carlos Camacho, visited the 3rd grade students of Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School last Feb. 6. The students are currently learning about CNMI history and government and Dr. Camacho was invited to come and speak about his experience as the first governor of the Commonwealth.

VALENTINE'S DAY JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

D&Q Saipan staff Jessy Furagganan, Romel Espinosa, Glesie Hirshbein and Glennise Ada gather for a photo at the lobby of Saipan Grand Hotel on Valentines Day.

A LAST PICTURE WITH THE BOSS JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Bobbie's café staff gather beside their boss photo, the late John "JP" Pangelinan, during the Eucharistic Celebration of Christian burial at the Mt. Carmel Cathedral Tuesday morning.

AWARDS GALORE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GTC Elementary School third grader Julia Angelika Mecaella Bernardo Espino poses with the three awards she received recently.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jess and Fe enjoy the moment during Raymond's party.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Helen and Fat Joy Slim band's James grace Raymond's birthday bash.

BIRTHDAY BASH CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Raymond Tolentino joins his friends Jess, Paul and Jo during his birthday celebration at the Aquarius Beach Tower.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Close friends and colleagues flank birthday boy Raymond.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fat Joy Slim band's singer Joy strikes a pose with birthday boy Raymond Tolentino.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fe, Richard and other close friends gather for a photo with Raymond.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fe, Paul, Raymond and Fat Joy Slim band's Badjhoe during Raymond's birthday bash.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Paul and Joy with birthday boy Raymond.

Youngstyle

So you want to be a motorcycle police officer?

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Ask Todd Patterson, a sergeant with the Metropolitan Police Department's Presidential Motor Unit, to demonstrate the Beehive, the Pitchfork or the Lollipop, and he will smile while slowly shaking his head no.

Those are the names of three motorcycle formations that Patterson and others in his 40-officer unit use when escorting and protecting the president when he leaves the White House. Patterson knows each of these formations well, but he's too modest to show off. He would rather talk about the men in his unit and their daily efforts to do a tough job well.

Being a motorcycle police officer in the nation's capital means protecting the president, vice president, guests from other countries and other very important people as they move about town. Some trips are short. Other assignments, such as the presidential inaugural parade, are fairly complicated.

"We're the only group in the nation that does this regularly," Patterson says. "Our unit is always in the public eye."

It takes a lot of preparation and skill to make sure things go smoothly.

Patterson's motorcycle unit also works large demonstrations, marches, parades, funerals and events at Verizon Center and RFK Stadium. Sometimes an officer patrols crime-ridden neighborhoods and responds to emergencies—all from the back of a gleaming, 800-pound Harley-Davidson.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Todd Patterson, a sergeant in Washington's Metropolitan Police Department, performs the Little General, a low-speed turn, during a competition to test his skills. Officers routinely sharpen their riding skills in department-sponsored competitions.

BY THE NUMBERS

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

40: Number of motorcycle officers in the Presidential Motor Unit.

75: Approximate number of motorcycle officers in the Metropolitan Police Department.

120: Number of hours of special training required to be a District of Columbia motorcycle officer.

$61,500: Typical salary for a police sergeant.

Sources: *Bureau of Labor Statistics; Metropolitan Police Department, Special Events Branch*

"I wanted to be a policeman since I was 8 or 9," says Patterson, now 46. He joined the department in 1985 and served as a patrol officer and detective for about 12 years before becoming a motorcycle officer.

In his current job, Patterson supervises all motorcycle training for the department.

On patrol, motor officers need to be alert at all times for hazards and threats. A key part of Patterson's job is making sure officers are prepared. "We ride all-year-round," he says, "and we train all-year-round."

The officers know that "any time you put on a uniform, you have to be prepared," Patterson says. "A lot of times, things come up unexpectedly."

They have been shot at, attacked with knives and yelled at. All of them have had accidents on their bikes, including being hit by drivers who didn't see them. Patterson has been struck twice.

The officers take potential dangers in stride. "I don't ever feel scared at work. I am confident in my ability to handle almost any situation," Patterson says.

"We adapt. We make things work," another officer says.

The VIPs they assist seem grateful. "Occasionally we are fortunate enough to meet and shake their hands," Patterson says, "as a sign of their appreciation for safely escorting them through our city."

The best and worst of times

The worst time to be a motorcycle officer?

"When it's 32 degrees and raining."

The best?

"Inauguration. All you are seeing is people (along Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington). It's the ultimate rush. The whole world is watching."

— Officer Todd Patterson

CAREER TIPS

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Want to be a motorcycle officer? Before you hop on a Harley, here are some things you can do to prepare.

Stay in Shape

Being a police officer is physically demanding. You need to be healthy and in good shape.

Get Good Grades

Many officers study criminal justice in college. Some go on to get advanced degrees.

Do Your Chores

"Take out the trash for your dad." Officer Todd Patterson says this is important. It shows you respect the people in charge.

Get to Know a Police Officer

If you have questions about what it's like to be an officer, visit your local police station and make a new friend.

Meet the Minimum Requirements

To be on the District of Columbia police force, you must be at least 21 and a U.S. citizen. You also must have a driver's license and have at least 60 hours of college credit.

Taxidermist has all the right stuffing

By AMY ORNDORFF
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Is it real?

That's the question that taxidermist Paul Rhymer hears most from kids who visit the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, where he works.

Yes, it is real. No, there are no guts still inside. No, it won't bite.

Taxidermy—preparing the skin of a dead animal so that it looks lifelike—is part art and part science.

Rhymer's specimens are animals that have died in zoos or were hit by vehicles. In order to make a museum critter as scientifically accurate as possible, he needs to understand how an animal's body looks and works.

It's harder than you might think.

"Everyone knows what a penguin looks like, until they have to make one," he says.

Penguins are part of Rhymer's current project: the museum's new Ocean Hall, which is to open in September.

He also is working on some birds for the new hall. "You can put a lot of expression in them," he says, explaining why he loves making birds.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Paul Rhymer, taxidermist at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, is creating lifelike penguins for the Ocean Hall exhibit scheduled to open in September. He says taxidermy is like making an animal "from the inside out."

Rhymer, 45, started learning how to prepare dead animals when he was 8 by helping his father, who also was a taxidermist. After looking for a career in art, Rhymer found a way to combine his artistic talents with the skill of taxidermy.

Completing a job can take several hours to several months.

For birds, Rhymer starts with excelsior (a straw-like material) and wire for the legs, wings and neck. He wraps the excelsior until he has the shape he wants.

Preserving an animal's skin or fur can be done in a variety of ways, including using chemicals such as borax.

"You are basically making (the animal) from the inside out," he says.

Rhymer does a lot of research before he starts a project, so that the animal will look like it did in the wild. Working at the Smithsonian gives Rhymer access to scientists who are experts in whatever animals he is researching.

Every detail, from how an animal stands to the color of its eyes, must be perfect. Primates are especially complicated. "They are as individual-looking as you and I are," Rhymer says.

If the Smithsonian is unable to find the right specimen for an exhibit, Rhymer will make a model of the animal. If he needs help, his wife, Carolyn, is a model-maker at the Smithsonian.

When he's not making new pieces for exhibits, Rhymer restores older ones. Although he has worked for the Smithsonian for 23 years, there are many animals that have been in the museum's collection a lot longer than that. Since some of them are now extinct, Rhymer makes sure they stay in good shape for people to see.

He pays special attention to his favorite animal, the pink fairy armadillo. "It's just so weird," he says. "How often do you have 'pink' in the name of an animal?"

Jeff Corwin: A man of 'experience'

By BRENNA MALONEY
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Sticky leeches in Borneo. A jeweled-eye gecko in Madagascar. The fearsome black mamba snake in Namibia.

Strange creatures from far-off places, but each one a friend to Jeff Corwin.

The host of Animal Planet's "The Jeff Corwin Experience" has been working to protect endangered species and ecosystems since he was a teen. "I was never far from the weird and the wild," he says.

Growing up in Maine, Corwin quickly became the go-to guy when someone found a turtle with a broken shell or a hawk with a broken wing. At age 16 his world grew beyond his small community: "I talked my way onto a scientific expedition to Belize."

The Central American country left a lasting impression. "The rainforest ecology helped define my mission," he says. "It helped me home in on what I wanted to be, who I wanted to be."

Corwin now travels the world—as many as 15 countries a year—to profile unique and wonderful places and animals. His show, which reaches more than 13 million viewers in the United States and is seen in more than 70 countries, emphasizes that humans and wildlife can co-exist if they respect one another. "The Jeff Corwin Experience—Season One" is now available on DVD.

Corwin says his job is fun but demanding. On the road 10 months of the year and often changing time zones every few days, he has been ill with dengue fever, African tick fever and malaria. When it's not illness, it's something else. Recently Corwin had a run-in with an elephant.

"I was attacked," he says. "It was in a river behind me. I was talking about him, and suddenly he charged me and grabbed me and nearly ripped my arm out of the socket."

Corwin is quick to add that "any dangers we encounter usually have more to do with man and human conflict."

In his view, humans are far more dangerous than animals: "You can never predict what the human animal can do."

Performance-enhancing drugs carry health risks

By KATHERINE SHAVER
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WASHINGTON—Baseball returns to Capitol Hill on Wednesday for another look into the illegal use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. One of the sport's biggest stars, pitcher Roger Clemens, is scheduled to testify at a congressional hearing.

Clemens was one of about 90 players named in December in a major report on the use of such drugs in baseball. But it's not just pro athletes who are risking severe health problems in this way, the report noted.

In an effort to gain a competitive edge, about two of every 100 eighth-graders and almost five of every 100 high school students admit to using steroids illegally, studies show. That might not sound like many, but it adds up to thousands of young people across the country.

What concerns doctors most: No one knows what the drugs do to kids long-term.

■ ■ ■

Imagine a boy developing breasts or a girl growing a mustache. Or how about turning yellow, losing hair or feeling really moody?

Doctors say that's what can happen to kids who use what are called anabolic steroids.

These drugs cause muscle tissue to grow, making people bigger and stronger. Steroids can help some athletes such as weightlifters train harder because they can work out more frequently.

But bigger isn't always better, doctors say.

Laurel Blakemore, chief of orthopedic surgery and sports medicine at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, says the health risks of steroids far outweigh any benefits. There's no proof, she says, that the drugs make a football player run faster or a basketball player shoot better.

"It's not guaranteed to improve performance," Blakemore says.

Not all steroids are dangerous. Some are used in medicines that treat health problems such as cancer, asthma and allergies.

But anabolic steroids are made to build muscles by mimicking a hormone in the body called testosterone (pronounced tess-TOSS-tur-own). Though illegal without a prescription, the drugs are available on the Internet and on the street under names such as "arnolds," "gym candy," "pumpers, "roids" and "juice."

Anthwon Broome, 11, who plays soccer on a Boys & Girls Club team, says he's never heard of kids his age taking illegal steroids. But his father has warned him about the drugs. Anthwon says that he and his friends think it's "stupid" for anyone, especially professional athletes, to use them.

"Athletes have talent, and they shouldn't ruin their careers because of one drug or one mistake," says the sixth-grader at Friendship Public Charter School-Chamberlain Campus in Washington.

Doctors and coaches hope that other kids agree.

Darius Stanton, an official with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, says young athletes refuse drugs when they feel good about themselves. Stanton says that kids should think beyond winning — that sports is also good exercise and a way to develop personal skills such as leadership and teamwork.

"Winning is important, but it's not the most important thing," he says. "The most important thing is the effort you put into it."

And that doesn't come in a drug.

What Steroids Can Do to the Body
Anabolic steroids help build bulging muscles by mimicking a hormone in the body called testosterone. They also limit the breakdown of protein in muscle cells, which means that after hard exercise steroid users don't feel as sore as nonusers do. This allows steroid users to exercise more frequently.
No one knows for sure what steroids can do to kids over the long term, but we do know some possible harmful side effects of steroid abuse:
EFFECTS ON THE MIND
► Severe mood swings, depression and increased aggression
EFFECTS ON THE BODY
► Severe acne, yellowed or "jaundiced" skin
► Heart attacks, high cholesterol
► Liver damage; increased risk of liver tumors and cancer
► Stunted growth in arm and leg bones; increased risk of tendon tears
SOURCES: Drug Enforcement Administration, Mitchell Report, National Institute for Drug Abuse
HORMONES
For teens, hormone balance is important. Hormones are involved in the development of a girl's feminine traits and a boy's masculine traits. When someone abuses steroids, gender mix-ups are possible.
► Boys can experience changes in their reproductive organs. They can suffer premature hair loss. They also can end up with breasts.
► Girls can experience changes in their reproductive cycles. They can become more masculine. Their voices can deepen. They might grow more body hair.

A Poetic and Illustrated Celebration

February is Black History Month in the United States and Canada. Also known as African American History Month, it began in 1976 as an outgrowth of a week-long celebration of contributions by African Americans to history and culture.

Black History Month is a time for people of all races to appreciate how these contributions have improved living conditions for everyone. KidsPost's Marylou Tousignant reviews some good books to get you started. Your public library has many more to offer.

TWELVE ROUNDS TO GLORY
The Story of Muhammad Ali

Written in verse by Charles R. Smith Jr.
For ages 9-13

Arguably the greatest boxer ever, Cassius Clay, at right, knocked the world on its ear at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, Italy.

"I am the greatest!" he boasted. Few could argue with that.

But his refusal to join the Army and go to Vietnam and his conversion to Islam (when he took the name Muhammad Ali) turned off many white people. But no one could dispute his results in the ring. "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee," he said of his style. As he racked up 56 wins, including three heavyweight titles, Ali became an international sports hero to many, as shown here in Bryan Collier's drawings, which pack a powerful punch of their own.

The passing of time and a disease called Parkinson's ended Ali's career in 1981. "Was it too many punches? Too many blows," the author asks, "to the head, to the body, that made your motor skills slow?"

At the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, lighting the Olympic flame was the trembling hand of Muhammad Ali. By then a global ambassador for peace as well as sports, in 2005 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

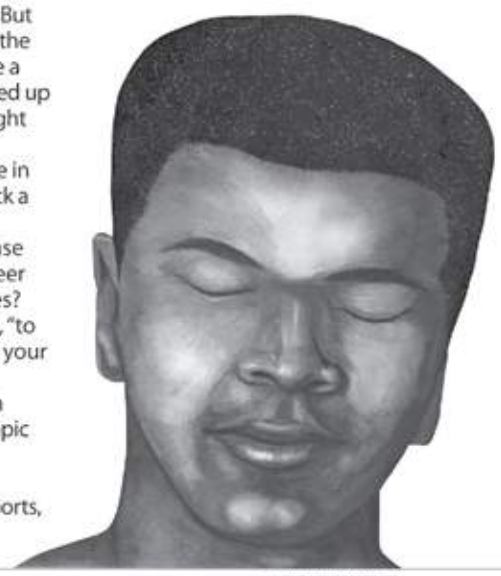


ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN COLLIER

JAZZ A·B·Z

Written in verse by Wynton Marsalis
For ages 11 and older

From Louis Armstrong (he's the A in the title) to Dizzy Gillespie (he's the Z), the 26 poetic profiles in this snazzy collection have music in every line. Consider this description of Washington's own Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington:

Ellington is a most elegant man
Suit, shirt, and shoes, slicked-back hair spic-and-span
Perfect pressed trousers and tie tied just right

BOOK DESIGN BY JILL VON HARTMANN

Even his casual clothes outta sight.

Can't you just picture him? If not, the wonderful poster-like illustrations by Paul Rogers will complete the image.

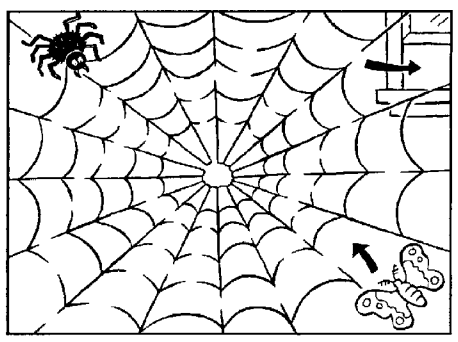
This new edition of the book, first published in 2005, comes with a colorful Rogers print of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

There are more than 20 styles of verse, from abstract to word play, and short bios on each of the 26 musicians. Our only complaint: Where's the CD? To really dig Eubie Blake and Ella Fitzgerald, you've got to hear them.

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL ROGERS

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad by Ann Petry. For ages 10 and older. Maryland-born Harriet Tubman wasn't content with her own escape from slavery. She wanted freedom for all. She is said to have led more than 300 slaves to freedom.

Tree Shaker: The Story of Nelson Mandela by Bill Keller. For ages 10-13. A biography of the South African who helped bring an end to that country's system of racial segregation, called apartheid (pronounced uh-PAR-tied). Lots of news photos capture your attention.



THE SILKEN MAZE! See if you can help this fly get through the silken maze, and out the window, before Spidey pounces on him.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

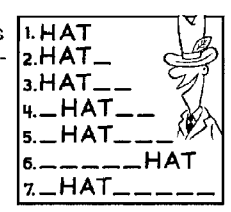
G	R	U	B	S	Y	T	T	E	G	I	V	L	D
D	N	A	M	M	O	C	S	H	D	F	E	E	B
O	U	V	W	V	O	Z	L	L	E	L	B	A	L
U	U	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	E	A	K	D	A
G	P	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	T	N	T	E	W
L	B	O	O	T	H	V	D	E	W	M	D	R	Y
A	J	M	E	M	O	R	I	A	L	L	R	E	E
S	C	A	B	I	N	L	O	C	N	I	L	Y	R

LUNCH BREAK TROUBLE! Henry was supposed to buy 4 hamburgers and 3 sodas for $14.50. Instead, he bought 3 hamburgers and 4 sodas for $13.50. What was the price of a single hamburger? A single soda?

Answer: One hamburger cost $2.50. One soda, $1.50.

A HAT OF MANY SIZES! In this puzzle, all of the words we are searching for contain the word "HAT." The following hints should help "crown" you with success:

1. HAT (given).
2. To greatly dislike.
3. A ship opening.
4. Old type of roofing.
5. A French castle.
6. Casual conversation
7. Broken into many pieces.



Answers: 1. Hat. 2. Hate. 3. Hatch. 4. Thatch. 5. Chateau. 6. Chitchat. 7. Shattered.

LOOKING FOR LINCOLN!

Hidden in the diagram above are 17 words associated with the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. They can be found by reading up or down, or side to side. You'll even find them diagonally going up or down. Letters can be used more than once. Listed below are the words you're looking for:

Able	Douglas	Lincoln
Booth	Gettysburg	Memorial
Cabin	Holiday	President
Civil War	Ideals	Slender
Command	Lawyer	Theatre
Debate	Leader	

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Strange BUT TRUE

By SAMANTHA WEAVER

■ You might not be surprised to learn that, according to market research, the woman's opinion almost always prevails when a husband and wife disagree on clothing for the man.

■ The first gasoline superstation opened way back in 1912, in Memphis, Tenn. It had 13 pumps and one ladies restroom, but there was no restroom for men. Incidentally, at that time, the cost of a gallon of gas was 29 cents.

■ It was Nobel Prize-winning poet, dramatist and literary critic T.S. Eliot who made the following sage observation: "The years between 50 and 70 are the hardest. You are always asked to do things, and yet you are not decrepit enough to turn them down."

■ The name of Alcatraz Island—famed location of a high-security prison that's now a tourist attraction—comes from the Spanish "Isla de los Alcatraces," or "Island of Pelicans."

■ The tongue of the alligator is fastened to the jaw all the way around. That's why you'll never see a gator stick out its tongue.

■ Noted 18th-century Venetian adventurer, author and (more famously) lover, Casanova, reportedly ate 50 oysters every day. For breakfast. Incidentally, his full name was Giovanni Giacomo Casanova de Seingault—no wonder he shortened it.

■ Other than being actors, what do Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart and James Doohan have in common? During World War II, they were all Allied officers and pilots.

■ You might be surprised to learn that the Ohio River carries twice as much tonnage as the celebrated Panama Canal.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "The third-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the majority. The second-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the minority. The first-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking." —A.A. Milne

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MAGIC MAZE ● — STATION: CITIES

F	A	X	V	S	Q	E	O	L	J	T	H	E	C	A
X	V	T	R	P	D	N	R	C	S	L	R	R	J	H
F	D	W	H	I	T	E	H	O	U	S	E	B	Y	X
V	T	R	S	O	M	A	O	P	C	T	V	O	M	K
I	G	O	L	R	P	R	L	E	A	D	I	D	C	B
Z	N	I	A	E	N	O	D	W	M	X	R	O	W	U
T	P	F	L	O	R	R	T	Q	P	O	L	O	N	L
J	A	I	E	G	O	E	O	E	B	L	L	W	F	D
C	R	G	A	F	E	Y	W	X	E	W	A	M	V	T
S	I	R	X	W	P	O	N	G	L	R	F	L	N	L
P	S	O	S	K	N	A	E	B	L	J	T	E	I	G

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Bean	Elmwood	Oxford	Sweetwater
Campbell	Fall River	Paris	Tree Top
Chapel	Farmer	Pigeon Roost	Whitehouse
College	Old Town	Pilot	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	÷		+		11
x		+		+	
	x		+		13
–		x		+	
	÷		x		18
15		18		14	

1 2 3 3 4 6 7 8 9

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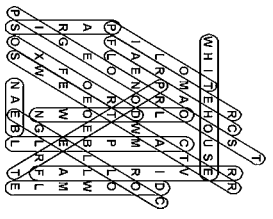
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

15	18		14		
9	÷	3	x	6	18
–	x		+		
3	x	4	+	1	13
x	+		+		
8	÷	2	+	7	11

Why are dogs rated by type?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I was watching a dog show on television recently. The announcers referred to various dogs on display as "from the working group," "from the sporting group" and so on. What's the difference? —Sarah K., Portland, Maine

DEAR SARAH: Purebred dogs are generally classified as such, and included in a "group," because they have the genetic characteristics of dogs originating from certain breeds that did a certain type of job. (Or, especially in the case of the "working group," often still do a job.)

In fact, let's take the working group as an example. These breeds of dogs—and they include shepherds, Alaskan Malamutes, Swiss mountain dogs, Newfoundlands, etc.—were developed to handle specific tasks that required a hardy, strong dog. Some of them pull sleds, others pull guard duty, and others rescue climbers and disaster victims.

The sporting group, on the other hand, is a group of dogs bred to assist hunters. Retrievers, setters, and spaniels are among the breeds in this group.

So, some may ask, why isn't the hound group a part of the sporting group? The hound is ancient and made up of a diversity of breeds, yet all those breeds—including the Beagle, the Afghan and the foxhound—have similar instincts and take similar action, chasing after their quarry rather than retrieving it or pointing it out to a hunter.

Let's not forget the terrier group, another group of dogs developed to do a distinctive job. Some were developed to hunt rodents and ground-dwelling animals; others, unfortunately, for fighting; and many others as all-around farm dogs and companion pets.

So, to make a long story short (hopefully), the groups into which purebred dogs are classified were developed based on common tasks for which these dogs were originally bred.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Box puppet play in three easy steps

Turn a dreary winter's day into a "play day" filled with whimsical box puppets your family can make in three easy steps. Pick characters from a favorite book and retell a story "puppet show" style. Or mix and match characters from several books. You might even create some puppets that look like family members, for an even livelier troupe. Use extra props and make funny voices and sound effects for a memorable performance.

Before you begin making your puppets, collect a few empty food boxes, such as single-portion cereal boxes, which are quite easy for younger children to manipulate. As your cast of puppet characters grows, it's definitely fun to use boxes in a range of shapes and sizes.

Here's what you need for your puppet workshop:

■ 1 single-portion cereal box, paper lining removed and open end glued shut. (For a larger puppet, use a standard-size cereal box.)

■ Poster paint and brushes

■ Markers

■ Construction paper

■ Glue and scissors

■ Odd and ends, such as felt, ping-pong balls, cotton balls and yarn for beards and hair.

Here's the fun:

With the front of the box facing you, draw a horizontal line around the middle of the box. An adult should cut along the line on the front and two narrow sides of the box. Do not cut the line on the back of the box. Instead, make a fold on that line so you can bend back the two connected halves of the box. Insert your fingers and thumb in the openings to test moving the "mouth" of the puppet.

Paint the outside of the box or cover it with construction paper. If you are making safari-style puppets, you might want to use adhesive-backed paper in tiger, lion or zebra prints.

Add craft supplies to represent the appearance of a book character or person in your family or neighborhood. Glue on ping-pong balls or plastic milk-jug lids for eyes. Make a dot in the center of each one with a marker. Add yarn or cotton balls for hair, and felt or craft foam for ears. Don't forget to make a tongue and glue it inside where the box opens and closes. Draw teeth or lips on the outside of the box. Add other details to create a distinct personality.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Actress Bai Ling accused of shoplifting

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Bai Ling's good looks and eccentric outfits have frequently put her picture in celebrity magazines, but that doesn't mean she can take the magazines for free.

The Chinese actress was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of shoplifting two celebrity magazines and two packets of batteries at Los Angeles International Airport. The items had a total value of $16, said Sgt. Jim Holcomb of the airport's police department.

The 41-year-old actress was detained by a store employee who summoned police, Holcomb said. She was booked for investigation of misdemeanor shoplifting and released after agreeing to appear in court on March 5.

An e-mail message seeking comment sent to Ling's agent on Thursday was not immediately returned.

Ling has appeared in such films as "The Crow" and "Anna and the King" and in the TV series "Lost."

The day of her arrest, she posted a message on her blog with a photo of herself at the airport waiting for a delayed flight. She made no mention of her arrest, instead wondering whether people were "rushing in the cold wind to work" after the Chinese New Year.

AP

This image provided by the Los Angeles Police Department, Airport Division shows a police booking photograph of Chinese actress Bai Ling.

"Life is a sad song sometime but still sings the beauty for their loved ones," she wrote.

Court extends Spears conservatorship

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The court extended the conservatorship of Britney Spears on Thursday, and took actions intended to give her father and a lawyer access to money in the pop singer's trust to cover her needs.

James Spears' temporary control over his daughter's life and estate will continue at least until a hearing on March 10, Superior Court Commissioner Reva Goetz said. At that time, she said, a court-appointed attorney also must submit an evaluation of Britney Spears' medical and psychological condition.

There was no mention of her condition since her latest release from a hospital.

After more than a year of bizarre behavior in which she divorced Kevin Federline and lost custody of her two young sons, Britney Spears was put in a psychiatric hospital twice in January and has been under a repeatedly extended temporary conservatorship since the beginning of February.

Attorney Jeryll Cohen, who represents James Spears, also told Goetz that investigators have spent more than 200 hours trying to locate the singer's sometime companion Sam Lutfi to serve him with a temporary restraining order issued in response to claims that he had taken virtual control of her life and even drugged her.

AP

Singer Britney Spears poses on the press line at the Scandinavian Style Mansion party in Los Angeles in this Dec. 1, 2007 file photo.

"We have made great effort to have Mr. Lutfi served," said Cohen. "We staked out his residence at the hospital. We did many things we do not want to discuss right now. We have information he is intentionally avoiding service."

Cohen asked that the order be reissued if it is not served in time for Lutfi to obtain counsel and appear for a Feb. 22 hearing. The commissioner agreed and said that when Lutfi does appear, she will order live testimony taken.

Goetz also granted a request to expand James Spears' powers as conservator to allow him to handle taxes on Britney Spears' assets and other matters.

Among numerous lawyers present were Andrew Wallet, who was appointed with the father as a co-conservator for her estate, and two attorneys representing Britney Spears' brother, Bryan.

Goetz granted an application by a law firm and Bryan Spears to be named temporary co-trustees of a trust established by Britney Spears in order for them to gain access to assets held in it.

Documents submitted to the court said Britney Spears set up the trust in 2004 with herself as the sole trustee and "all of Britney's liquid assets are vested in the trust."

As a result, the documents said, the co-conservators have been unable to access any liquid assets and her family members, friends and members of her household have been paying for her necessities.

"Immediate access to the trust's liquid assets is necessary to pay for Britney's security, and to pay for her medicine, food, other day-to-day expenses, and for psychiatric and other essential medical services," the papers said.

'Great Debaters' tops Image Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Denzel Washington's "The Great Debaters" and Tyler Perry's TBS series "House of Payne" took top honors at Thursday night's NAACP Image Awards.

"The Great Debaters" was named top film, while acting prizes went to its stars Washington, Jurnee Smollett and teenager Denzel Whitaker. Washington also directed the film, based on the real-life victories of a black debating team in the 1930s.

"I'll be at that other show next week, but my heart is here," said Washington, who is a presenter at the Feb. 24 Academy Awards. "I'm just so happy to see these young people get recognized."

"Tyler Perry's House of Payne" won for comedy series, and its stars LaVan Davis and Lance Gross won acting prizes. Perry said they had produced 100 shows in a year and that TBS just ordered up another 26.

"Nobody thought it would work," Perry said. "I don't care if a thousand people tell you no, if you get one yes from God, that's all you need to make it. Today I stand here with that God yes."

Janet Jackson won for supporting actress in a motion picture for her turn as psychiatrist in Perry's adaptation of his own stage play, "Tyler Perry's Why Did I Get Married?"

Jackson later introduced Stevie Wonder as he was inducted into the NAACP Hall of Fame. Wonder used his time onstage to praise the 99-year-old organization, saying "it's through this organization that we now have two (presidential) candidates, one a female and the other an African-American."

"I say let them both win so that we can have a strong, united people of the United States," Wonder said to applause. "I'm very very excited about the possibility."

Alicia Keys won four awards in the music category - for album, song, music video and female artist - but was not in attendance and was not mentioned during the televised portion of the ceremony. The show featured musical performances from Ziggy Marley and Angelique Kidjo, Sounds of Blackness and Wonder.

Special honors at the 39th Image Awards, held at the Shrine Auditorium, went to veteran Oscar-nominated actress Ruby Dee and to singer Aretha Franklin.

Franklin said she was on hand for NAACP's very first awards ceremony.

Burden of sister's secret weighs on teen's mind

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am a 14-year-old girl. Lately I have been dealing with overwhelming feelings of sadness and depression. Just recently I found out that my sister's ex had physically abused her and her daughter. When my sister told me, she made me swear I wouldn't tell our parents. Not only do our parents not know, but she refuses to take it to court or to report it. When I confronted her, she told me she would rather put it behind her and forget about it.

I don't understand how she can let this man get away with what he did.

I don't know who to turn to. If I tell my parents, my sister will never trust me again. But if I don't tell, he might come back and hurt them. Please tell me what to do.

—TERRIFIED FOR MY SISTER

DEAR TERRIFIED: Your sister, like many victims of domestic violence, may blame herself for what happened to her and feel too embarrassed to report it. It is also not uncommon for men who beat up their partners to also abuse their children.

For her daughter's sake, the crime(s) should have been reported when they occurred and there was solid proof. However, because she didn't do that, I can only hope that she will keep the child away from her father—who obviously hasn't enough impulse control to safely act as a responsible parent.

Some secrets are meant to be kept, but this isn't one of them. There is no reason you should carry this burden alone. Tell your parents and don't feel guilty about it. I have been advised that depression is anger turned inward. You are sad because you feel helpless to do anything about your sister's circumstances. Once your parents know what happened, they can help your sister ensure her safety and that of her daughter.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Marrying one's high school sweetheart is common in my family. My parents, both of my aunts and two cousins are happily married to the people they began dating exclusively when they were teenagers.

Now my older brother, "Aiden," has joined their ranks. He recently married a girl he had dated since eighth grade. They are only 23, but blissfully happy. I'm glad for my brother, but now my relatives are wondering why I haven't followed suit.

There is no going back to high school for me, so I find myself trapped in awkward blind dates as loving family members—especially my mother—desperately try to find someone for me.

How can I make them understand that I really don't want to go out with the neighbor boy who is three years younger than I am? Also, is there something wrong with me because I haven't found "the one," as my other family members have?

—OLD MAID OF THE FAMILY, MANSFIELD, TEXAS

DEAR OLD MAID: The surest way to make your family understand is to keep your sense of humor about their attempts at matchmaking and not to become defensive. There is nothing wrong with being single -- people are remaining single longer now than ever before. Some men -- and women -- remain single their entire lives, and happily so. So please don't allow yourself to be made to feel time is running out because you haven't rushed to the altar. It takes some people longer than others to find that perfect match, but in most cases, "there's a pot for every lid."

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

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Pastimes

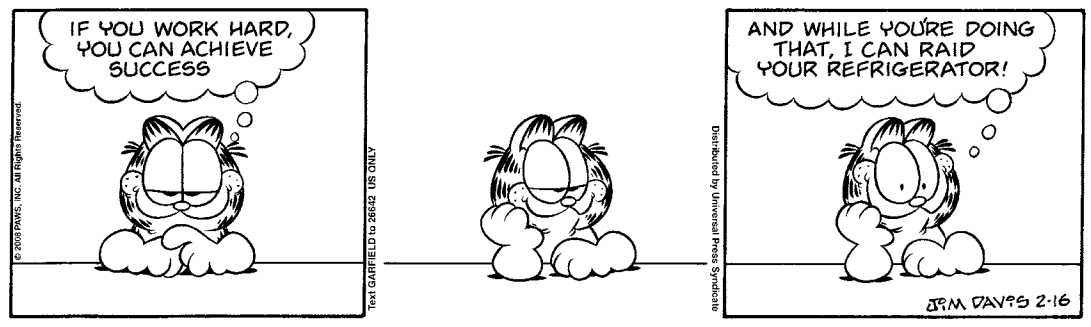
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

YOU TRANSMOGRIFIED ME INTO A TINY PTERODACTYL??
BIG DINOSAURS GIVE ME THE WILLIES.
©1988 Universal Press Syndicate
YOU NUMBSKULL! HOW AM I GOING TO TERRORIZE THE NEIGHBORHOOD LIKE THIS?!
MY, AREN'T YOU THE CRANKY ONE TODAY?
BY GOLLY, I'LL SHOW YOU!
ZAP
HA HA! SERVES YOU RIGHT!
YOU, MY FRIEND, JUST MADE A BIG MISTAKE.
2/16

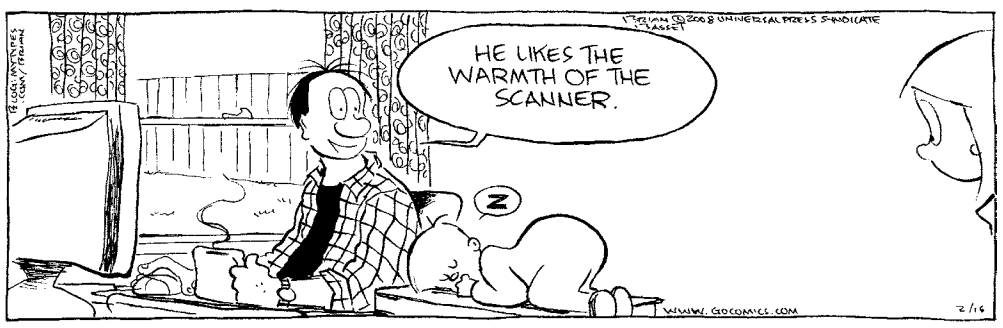
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU CAN ACHIEVE SUCCESS
© 2008 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
Text GARFIELD to 26642 US ONLY
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
AND WHILE YOU'RE DOING THAT, I CAN RAID YOUR REFRIGERATOR!
JIM DAVIS 2-16

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

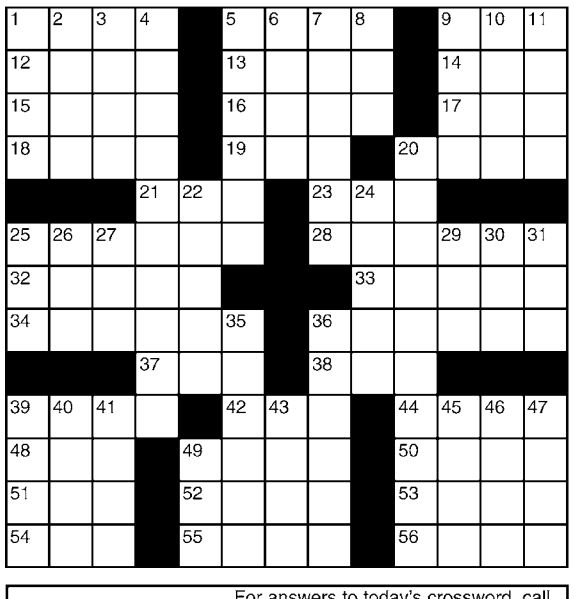
ACROSS
1 Vacationing
5 Puts into the mix
9 Chatter
12 Options list
13 Security breach
14 Right angle
15 Flash Gordon foe
16 Cautious
17 As well
18 Sandwich treat
19 Skill
20 Whoopi's show, with "The"
21 Agent
23 Outer (Pref.)
25 Aesop's lore
28 Din
32 Show spike
33 Jockey Cauthen
34 Astute
36 Packed away
37 George's brother
38 Standard
39 Hirt hit
42 Sick
44 Vagrant
48 N.A. nation
49 Bewildered
50 Monad
51 USO audience, often
52 Conks out
53 Money
54 Perched
55 Egyptian cross
56 Scandinavian city

DOWN
1 Bullets
2 "Dead Poets Society" director
3 Boleyn or Bancroft
4 Serbia and Montenegro, once
5 Nonstop
6 Cherished
7 Cormorant's cousin
8 Firmament
9 Bigfoot's kin
10 Lotion additive
11 Farm implement
20 "Les Miserables" author
22 First name of 2-Down
24 High-carb entree
25 Media agcy.
26 The whole shootin' match
27 Spelldown
29 Melbourne suburb
30 First lady
31 Williams of baseball lore
35 1973 Hansberry-based musical
36 1984 mermaid movie
39 Moonshine containers
40 Largest of the seven
41 Expansive
43 Welsh emblem
45 Individuals
46 Tab
47 Sgt. Snorkel's dog
49 Oklahoma city

Solution time: 27 mins.

A	B	S	■	P	A	C	K	■	T	H	U	S
D	O	H	■	A	L	O	E	■	H	A	R	P
S	W	A	N	S	O	N	G	■	A	L	G	A
■	■	N	E	S	T	■	■	I	N	F	E	R
A	G	G	I	E	■	T	I	C	K	■	■	■
D	A	H	L	■	D	U	C	K	S	O	U	P
A	G	A	■	T	O	B	E	Y	■	B	R	O
R	A	I	L	R	O	A	D	■	L	E	A	K
■	■	■	L	A	M	S	■	D	O	I	L	Y
C	H	E	A	P	■	■	A	R	T	S	■	■
L	I	A	M	■	D	O	V	E	T	A	I	L
O	K	R	A	■	A	R	E	A	■	N	R	A
Y	E	N	S	■	G	E	R	M	■	T	A	X

Yesterday's answer 2-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steffani Brass, 16; John McEnroe, 49; Ice-T, 50; Levar Burton, 51

Happy Birthday: This can be a progressive year if you push for what you want. Doors will open if you offer your services to a group or an organization that you believe in. Passion will be what drives you. Emotions will be close to the surface, allowing you to be true to yourself and those with whom you associate. Your numbers are 8, 13, 21, 25, 32, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Talks will lead to actions. Your forceful manner and aggressive behavior will show you're passionate about what you want to pursue. Your manner will spark enthusiasm in others, leading to the support you need. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): It won't be possible to do what you want or to make transitions without viewing everything available to you. Take advantage of what's being offered and be willing to make adjustments for what isn't. Don't let negative people upset your plans. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You are in a great position, so don't let anyone tell you otherwise. What's good for you now is probably making someone you are close to fearful about his or her future. A little nudge will bring about advancement. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You must keep a secret or you are likely to ruin someone else's surprise. A change of plans or a sudden decision to visit someone or take a day trip will lead to an interesting turn of events. A knowledgeable individual will shed some light on a situation you face. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Take a bit of a breather and you will notice something you've been overlooking. There is a chance someone has been taking advantage of your generosity. Love and passion will lead to a better relationship. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Back down if someone is trying to goad you into a challenging encounter. Keep a clear mind and be thoughtful in the way you handle others. As long as you are calm, honest and fair, you will have nothing to regret. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Your emotions may be difficult to control. An event you attend will alter the way you do things and perhaps give you a new outlook. You can incorporate something new and exciting into your life. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Pick your allies carefully. You may end up taking on someone who is not trustworthy. Don't leave any of your responsibilities for someone else to take care of or you may have to do everything all over again. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be drawn to someone who is dynamic and entertaining. Enjoy the moment and play the game your way and you will gain respect and admiration. There is an opportunity to form a wonderful alliance. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Take care of matters as they arise and be certain to take care of each concern on your own. This is not the time to trust anything important to someone who may not have your best interests at heart. A change of plans may be made behind your back. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You can do no wrong when it comes to self-improvement and updating your life, looks and situation. Get together with people who stimulate your mind and can add to your progress. A serious commitment can be made. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Keep your conversations honest, fair and to the point. Anger based on emotional responses will lead to an irreconcilable difference. Think before you act or speak. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You strive to be the best you can and will not stop until you reach the number-one position. You are a thinker and a doer and will never back down or give in if you want something.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			8		5			
	5			1			7	
2	1						4	3
3								7
	4						9	
1								8
4	9						5	2
	6			4			1	
			6		1			

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	9	4	3	5	6	2	7	8
5	6	8	2	4	7	1	3	9
3	2	7	1	9	8	6	4	5
6	8	1	7	3	4	5	9	2
9	4	3	8	2	5	7	6	1
2	7	5	6	1	9	3	8	4
7	1	2	9	8	3	4	5	6
4	3	9	5	6	1	8	2	7
8	5	6	4	7	2	9	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/15

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING **Solution: 9 letters**

C	L	I	E	N	T	S	E	X	A	M	T	(D)	P	S
N	O	R	M	A	L	C	A	R	E	T	(A)	R	R	C
S	E	M	M	E	M	O	R	Y	O	(T)	S	N	O	A
E	R	R	P	G	U	I	D	E	(A)	L	K	A	F	L
E	O	L	G	A	T	H	E	R	A	Y	P	O	I	E
F	C	S	R	R	R	Y	G	E	T	T	C	X	L	V
Z	S	Y	O	E	A	E	R	I	I	U	E	B	E	A
L	E	M	U	V	T	U	L	N	S	C	A	E	Y	L
O	S	P	P	A	S	A	M	S	L	I	T	B	T	U
C	N	T	S	A	N	E	D	I	L	A	E	I	I	A
O	O	O	E	O	T	R	N	E	L	P	S	R	V	T
T	P	M	S	S	O	I	R	G	I	P	T	C	I	E
O	S	R	Y	C	C	H	E	C	K	L	I	S	T	A
R	E	S	E	A	R	C	H	N	S	Y	N	E	C	C
P	R	R	L	I	L	U	M	I	T	S	G	D	A	H

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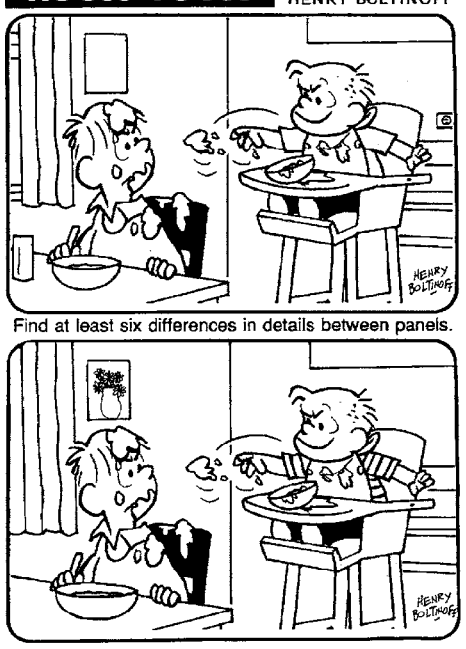
Activity, Apply, Average, Checklist, Clients, Clinical, Compare, Create, Data, Describe, Evaluate, Exam, Explore, Fees, Focus, Format, Gather, Groups, Guide, Measure, Memory, Normal, Patient, Personality, Profile, Protocol, Rate, Records, Reliable, Research, Response, Scale, Score, Skill, Start, Stimuli, Symptom, System, Target, Task, Teach, Testing

Yesterday's Answer: Conserve

We listened to your requests! **TREASURY #6** is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each. U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free 1-800-255-5734, ext. 6688. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Baby's shirt has stripes. 2. Picture is different. 3. Curtain covers window. 4. Boy's bowl is larger. 5. Wall outlet is missing. 6. Boy's glass is missing.

Wishing Well®

2	6	5	2	8	2	8	7	4	6	3	6	5
F	D	S	O	L	C	I	Y	Y	O	U	Y	T
4	6	4	3	5	7	3	2	6	8	4	7	4
O	O	U	N	A	O	S	U	U	F	P	U	L
6	8	2	3	6	2	5	7	5	3	4	8	7
R	E	S	E	V	E	Y	F	F	L	A	I	O
4	8	3	5	8	6	5	7	6	8	4	8	6
N	S	F	O	M	E	C	R	R	A	A	D	Y
2	4	3	4	6	4	5	7	8	3	8	7	3
N	C	I	R	B	U	U	M	E	S	E	B	H
8	5	4	5	6	4	5	8	7	2	6	8	6
A	S	I	E	E	S	D	S	O	E	S	I	T
4	8	7	2	7	8	3	2	3	2	3	2	2
E	E	N	R	D	R	A	G	I	I	D	E	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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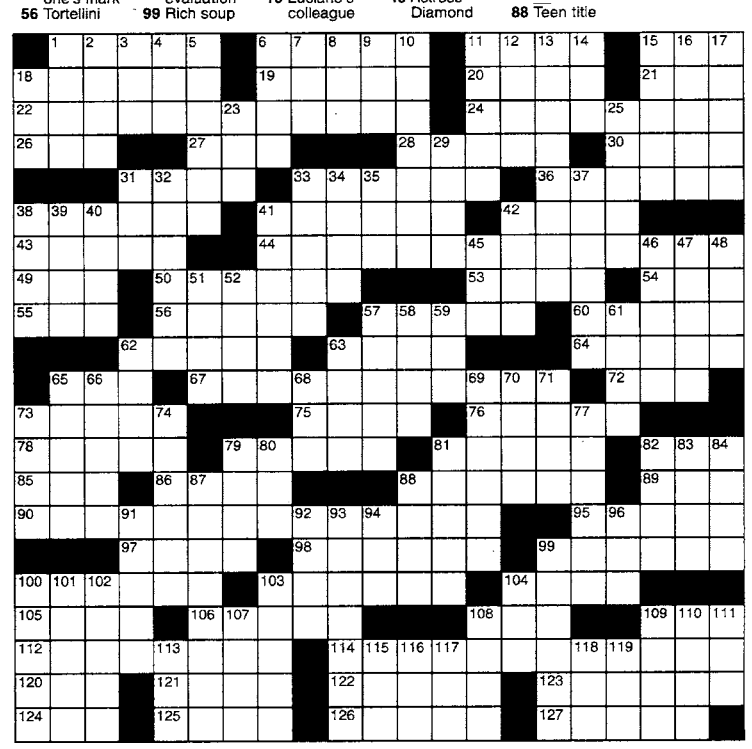
Super Crossword

WAYNE'S WORLD

ACROSS
1 Big bargain
6 Carpentry device
11 Diplomacy
15 Sault __ Marie, MI
18 Fill with fizz
19 "Bolero" composer
20 Return address?
21 Pallid
22 Frequent Wayne co-star
24 Film directed by Wayne
26 Wayfarer's whistle wetter
27 Thrill
28 Troubles
30 Pianist Gilels
31 Word with car or pea
33 Muhammad's daughter
36 Commotion
38 Tune
41 Small mall
42 Bearing
43 Faced the day
44 Wayne's birth name
49 __ Grande
50 Plot
53 Facilitate a felony
54 Poetic preposition
55 Makes one's mark
56 Tortellini topping
57 Fretful
60 Songwriter Greenwich
62 Jean of "Upstairs, Downstairs"
63 "__ Sorry Now" ('58 hit)
64 Gossip material
65 Numbers man?
67 Wayne's final film
72 Went jogging
73 Maestro Zubin
75 "Braveheart" costume
76 Fielder's equipment
78 Yale or Root
79 Corn
81 Simon's "Plaza __"
82 Rascal
85 Out of sorts
86 Restaurateur Toots
88 Seat cover?
89 Actress Peggy
90 Oscar-winning Wayne role
95 Hugh of "Small Time Crooks"
97 Spineless
98 Egg evaluation
99 Rich soup
100 Insist
103 Lost one's tail?
104 A shake in the grass?
105 "Star Trek VI" actress
106 Bendix role
108 Tease
109 Spigot
112 Frequent Wayne director
114 Wayne's role in "The Searchers"
120 Rink legend
121 New York city
122 Shortstop Pee Wee
123 Volcanic state
124 Comedian Louis
125 Actor Epps
126 A la King?
127 Proficient

DOWN
1 Navy warrior
2 "__ Colors" ('86 hit)
3 Teacup part
4 Tackled a taco
5 Margin
6 Singer Sheryl
7 __-di-dah
8 Palindromic name
9 "Mal de __"
10 Luciano's colleague
11 Neon __
12 Flu symptom
13 __ cat
14 Shelley's "__ Skylark"
15 Okefenokee, for one
16 Indian tongue
17 "__ Gay"
18 internists' org.
23 "__ if I can help it!"
25 Tea of "The Naked Truth"
29 Prayer finale
31 __ Cob, CT
32 Forsyth's "The __ File"
33 Surround a Seurat
34 "God's Little __" ('58 film)
35 Skater Babilonia
37 Olympian Al
38 "You Bet Your Life" emcee
39 Part of HOMES
40 Author Anita
41 Don of "Cocoon"
42 Melville title start
45 "Nowhere __" ('66 hit)
46 Actress Diamond
47 Sky stalker
48 __-do-well
51 Supermarket vehicle
52 "Be quiet!"
57 Complete
58 Night noise
59 Relative of -ator
61 Tempt
62 School subject
63 Crackerjack
65 Casals' instrument
66 Detective Vance
68 Emulate 102 Down
69 Exotic pet
70 Lingerie item
71 Shopper's sack
73 Golda of Israel
74 Darcy's creator
77 "The Aeneid" author
79 Mindy's mate
80 Circle section
81 Fathered a foal
82 Neighbor of Jordan
83 Waiter's offering
84 Fancy appetizer
87 TV's "Max __"
88 Teen title
91 Proust protagonist
92 Eye appreciatively
93 Cheeseboard choice
94 "__ Girls" ('79 smash)
96 Pretoria's loc.
99 "The Enlightened One"
100 Mustard city
101 Atlanta campus
102 Athlete Phil
103 More advanced
104 Rush
107 Role for Shirley
108 Patella's place
109 Kisser
110 Mine feature
111 Pressure meas.
113 To and __
115 Pigskin prop
116 "Tell __ About It" ('83 song)
117 "__ see it ..."
118 Gum gob
119 Overwhelm



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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. MOVIES: What two comedians got their first starring role in "Buck Privates"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Where is the island of Bonaire located?
3. ART: What is the name of the method used to enamel metal or ceramic?
4. LANGUAGE: What are mummers?
5. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is an ungulate?
6. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Who was Barbie's original best friend?
7. ENTERTAINMENT: What are the PATSY awards?
8. ADVERTISEMENTS: What product used the slogan, "Does she ... or doesn't she?"
9. HISTORY: What was Annie Oakley's nickname?
10. SCIENCE: What phrase forms the acronym "laser"?

Answers

1. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello
2. Caribbean
3. Cloisonné
4. Actors or entertainers
5. A mammal with hooves instead of claws
6. Midge
7. Given by the American Humane Association for best animal performances in film and TV
8. Miss Clairol hair color
9. Little Sure Shot
10. Light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation

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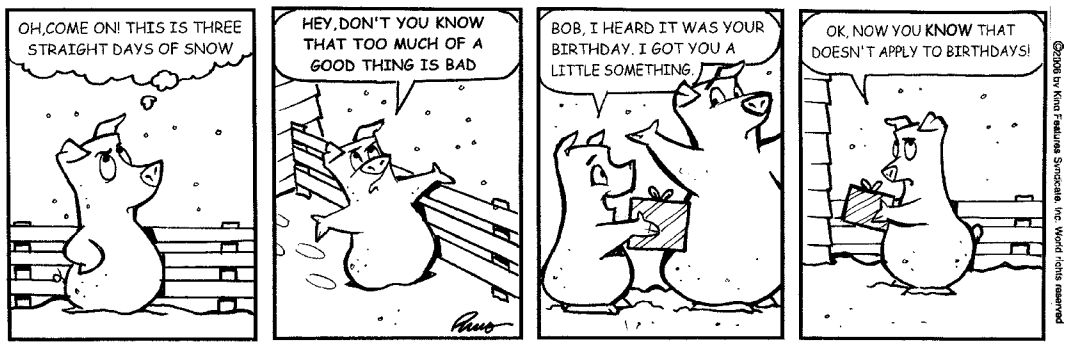
Saturday's Answers

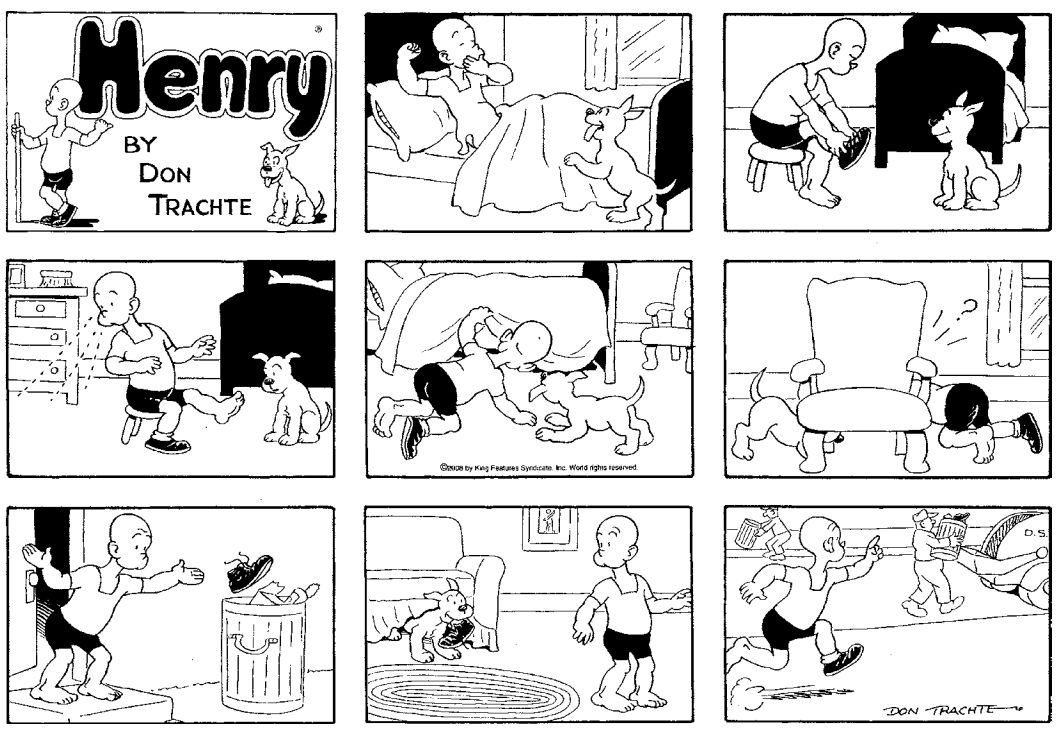
POPEYE
HEY EISMAN
I CAN'T RESIST THESE POST-HOLIDAY SALES!
LET'S GO SHOPPING, POPEYE!
HAVE A HEART, SWEETIE... TH'GAME IS JES'GITTIN' EXCITIN'!
IF I WENT FISHING WITH YOU... YOU SAID YOU'D GO SHOPPING WITH ME!
OH, AW RIGHT!
I'M GOING TO SHOP THE DRESS DEPARTMENT!
BUMBEL'S CLEARANCE SALE
I'LL WAIT HERE
I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING THERE
I'LL SHOP THE SHOE DEPT.
I'LL STILL BE HERE!
HMM-I COULD USE A NEW WALLET
MEN'S LEATHER GOODS
LOOKIT THAT, OLIVE! WHILE YA WUZ SHOPPIN', I SHOPPED FER A NEW WALLET!
THAT'S NOT SHOPPING, POPEYE...
...THAT'S BUYING!
SALE
www.kingfeatures.com

Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps


OH, COME ON! THIS IS THREE STRAIGHT DAYS OF SNOW
HEY, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING IS BAD
BOB, I HEARD IT WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY. I GOT YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING.
OK, NOW YOU KNOW THAT DOESN'T APPLY TO BIRTHDAYS!

The Spats by Jeff Pickering

MARK TRAIL
THE SLOW-MOVING PORCUPINE IS CANADA'S LARGEST RODENT NEXT TO THE BEAVER, AND IT IS FOUND IN MUCH OF THE TIMBERED AREAS OF NORTH AMERICA
THOUGH IT IS USUALLY THOUGHT OF AS A TREE DWELLER, THE PORCUPINE SPENDS MOST OF ITS TIME ON THE GROUND
PRIMARILY NOCTURNAL, PORCUPINES ARE ACTIVE YEAR-ROUND, FEEDING MAINLY ON TENDER VEGETATION DURING THE SUMMER...
BUT WHEN WINTER COLDS KILL GROUND VEGETATION AND SNOWS COVER THE LANDSCAPE, IT WILL TAKE TO THE TREES...
...CHANGING ITS DIET TO SUCCULENT YOUNG BARK, OFTEN MAKING IT THE SCOURGE OF TREE FARMERS
JACK FLOOD
THE PRICKLY RODENT'S CHOPPING AWAY AT THE UPPER LEVELS OF A TREE DROPS LARGE AMOUNTS OF BROWSE AS IT STRIPS OFF THE BARK...
THUS, UNKNOWINGLY, THE PORCUPINE PROVIDES NEEDED FOOD TO HELP TIDE OTHER ANIMALS OVER UNTIL THE SPRING THAW



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Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 HOUSEWORKER (ST 7329)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deductible; $100.00/food deductible; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Mariano Fajardo @233-4865.

---

1 GEN. MANAGER (ST 7330)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; medical & workers compensation & transportation from-to jobsite. Contact: Mantrade Company Inc. @235-0695.

---

1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (ST 7331)
Salary:$3.55-$6.00/hour. Benefits: Free housing except utility; medical bill & workers compensation is company provided. Contact: Big Boy Marine Sports, Inc. dba Big Boy'z II Marine @234-3358.

---

1 AUTO BODY, REPAIRER (ST 7332)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Company provide barracks; food not applicable; workers compensation & medical expenses. Contact: Marine Tech (Saipan), Inc. dba S2 Club @322-5079.

WELDER (ST 7333)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provide food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: CJ&L Construction Company @322-1954.

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37 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (ST 7334)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

11 SEWER (ST 7335)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

2 PRESSER (IRONING) (ST 7336)
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2 ELECTRICIAN (ST 7337)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

1 FIRST AID ATTENDANT (ST 7338)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

1 KITCHEN HELPER (ST 7339)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

4 PATTERN GRADER CUTTER (ST 7340)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

1 TAILOR (ST 7341)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

1 MERCHANDISE (ST 7342)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expenses & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

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1 GENERAL MANAGER (ST 7343)
Salary:$600.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Yebbun Corporation @235-0595.

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1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (ST 7344)
Salary:$3.85/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provide food; medical & workmen compensation provided by employer. Contact: Jose K Pangelinan dba Micronesia Design Group & Associates @286-7939.

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14 IRONER (ST 7345)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

8 CHECKER (QC) (ST 7346)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

1 GENERAL MANAGER (ST 7347)
Salary:$2,500.00-$4,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

1 COMPUTER OPERATOR (ST 7348)
Salary:$3.55-$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

6 CUTTER (ST 7349)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

1 PACKER (ST 7350)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

1 SECURITY GUARD (ST 7351)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (ST 7352)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

3 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (ST 7353)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

50 SEWING MACHINE OPERATOR (ST 7354)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workmen compensation. Contact: Kyunseung (Saipan), Inc. @322-5795.

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1 RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR (ST 7355)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food & workmen's compensation. Contact: Xinlong Corporation dba El's Restaurant @888-4025.

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1 COOK (ST 7356)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employee self arranged housing; employee provided food; workmen's compensation insurance is employee provided & medical expenses is reimbursable. Contact: Yolanda O. Alfante dba Kulit's Ent., @235-1105.

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1 MASON (ST 7357)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

1 CARPENTER (ST 7358)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable; workmen's compensation & insurance. Contact: RJCL Corporation dba RNV Construction @235-8778.

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1 JANITOR (ST 7359)
Salary:$3.55-$3.70/hour. Benefits: Medical/workmen's compensation; free transportation to & from jobsite at employers designated pick-up points. Contact: YCO Corp. dba YCO TrueValue Hardware/Do It Best Hardware/Liberty Dept. Store/YCO Construction/Appliance Outlets/Liberty Dept. Store/Naked Fish Bar & Grill/Servistar Motorsports @ 233-3112/3.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7360)
Salary:$4.00-$8.00/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical provided. Contact: Rufo T. Mafnas dba Rufo T. Mafnas, CPA @233-7836/233-1040.

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1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (ST 7361)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: $325.00/monthly housing; workmen's compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Saipan Community School @234-6687.

JOE HILL, Esq.,
HILL LAW OFFICES
P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 234-6806/7743
FAX: (670) 234-7753

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

YOLANDA F. TORRES-AUSTRIA Petitioner	)	FCD DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0410
versus	)	**SUMMONS**
ROGELIO AUSTRIA, Respondent.	)	

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Petition for Divorce which is given you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you.

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE IN WRITING and filed with the Clerk of Court, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950 and served upon petitioner's counsel, Atty. Joe Hill, P.O. Box 500917, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce.

By order of the above Court:

Dated this 12th day of July, 2007.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court
Superior Court

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As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune*'s print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

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Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

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- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MAINTENANCE/BLDG. REPAIRER (ST 7362)
Salary:$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation employer provided. Contact: Gualo Rai Court Apartment, Inc. @234-6552.

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1 MERCHANDISE (QUALITY CONTROL) DISTRIBUTOR (ST 7363)
Salary:$3.85/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Carmen Safeway Ent., Inc. dba Carmen Safeway Supermarket, Baby News, C-Mart Floral Lane Pacifica Funeral Services @234-7313.

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1 MAINTENANCE REPAIR BLDG. (ST 7364)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: ILC Corporation dba Ladera Int'l School of Saipan @288-2006.

1 ACCOUNTANT (ST 7365)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: ILC Corporation dba Ladera Int'l School of Saipan @288-2006.

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1 CASHIER (ST 7366)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: P&S Inc. dba 888 Poker, LA Poker @233-3228.

1 POKER ATTENDANT (ST 7367)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: P&S Inc. dba 888 Poker, LA Poker @233-3228.

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2 TOUR COORDINATOR (ST 7368)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Star 1 Corporation dba Star Tour & Star ATV Tracking @483-5252.

TRAVEL AGENT (ST 7369)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Land Star Corporation dba Land Star Tour Agency @233-2452.

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1 TOUR GUIDE (ST 7370)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Korea Tourism, Inc. dba Koreana Tours Bureau @233-3004.

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2 HAND PACKAGER (ST 7371)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (ST 7372)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; free medical expense & workmen's compensation. Contact: United International Corporation @235-6888/7888.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (ST 7373)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 (GEN.) MAINTENANCE REP. (ST 7374)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Medical & workmen compensation provided. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

1 COMPUTER TECHNICIAN (ST 7375)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: Employer provided housing; self provided food; workmen compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Pacific Blue Corporation dba PC Outlet CNMI @233-0168.

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1 DRESS MAKER (ST 7376)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation provided & transportation self arrange. Contact: Editha G. Welle dba Rit'z Dress Shop @235-4536.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (ST 7377)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation will be employer provided. Contact: Servino & Assoc., Inc. @235-5073.

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SPORTS

Indiana in bind over basketball coach

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)— Getting rid of coach Kelvin Sampson might not be the solution to Indiana's problems. It's a move that might just create a bigger mess.

When Sampson was accused Wednesday of five major NCAA infractions, it immediately set off a widespread debate over what the university should do next and whether Sampson should continue coaching at Indiana, which hasn't had a major NCAA rules violation in nearly half a century.

"The thing I'm disappointed with is that the allegations have come out, and I feel we have to react in some way that's in the best interests of the team and the best interests of the university," trustee Philip Eskew Jr. said. "I think there are options."

There's no guarantee the NCAA would reduce Indiana's potential penalties, and the university, which has spent the past decade paying millions of dollars to fired coaches and athletic directors, could wind up in another costly split-up.

According to the contract signed in April 2006, Indiana pays Sampson an annual base salary of $500,000. With five years left on the deal, the cost could reach at least $2.5 million.

Sampson's deal includes termination clauses for violations of university or NCAA rules that eliminate the payments. Attorneys, however, have differing views on whether the accusations, which include providing false or misleading information to investigators, would allow Indiana to fire Sampson with cause and get off the financial hook.

Athletic director Rick Greenspan acknowledged Wednesday these are only allegations since the NCAA has not yet made a ruling, and the distinction could be important.

"It (the contract) talks about significant, intentional or repetitive violations, so the question becomes when does it become a violation?" said Indianapolis attorney Stephen Backer, a former trustee at Indiana who works in contractual law. "That's the issue. I'm sure that's what they're meeting about today."

The university has until May 8 to respond to the NCAA's report. Sampson and university officials are scheduled to appear before the infractions committee June 14, with a final ruling expected within a month.

University spokesman Larry MacIntyre confirmed Thursday that president Michael McRobbie was still consulting with the school's lawyers, trustees and administrators. MacIntyre would not provide details on those discussions but acknowledged both sides have to abide by the rules set forth in the contract.

MacIntyre said Dorothy Frapwell, the university's counsel, declined to discuss Sampson's contract.

Milton Thompson, also an Indianapolis attorney, believes there's another caveat, too.

While he contends Indiana's report and Sampson's acceptance of the school's penalties in October amount to an admission of significant and repetitive violations, the coach may still have legal protection because he wasn't fired four months ago.

"There can always be a liability issue," Thompson said. "If they accepted the sanctions and didn't fire him then, that may be an area he could pursue."

Other potential clauses that could absolve the university of a hefty payout include those for moral turpitude and conduct seriously prejudicial to the university.

Both attorneys believe they are broad enough provisions that the university could use either one to make its case for firing Sampson with cause.

But even that can be tricky.

"In my opinion, yes, his conduct has been prejudicial to the university," said Backer, who was against Sampson's hiring from the start. "But the provision says it has to be seriously prejudicial, and the question is has it risen to the level of being seriously prejudicial?"

When Sampson was hired by Indiana two years ago, he was already facing NCAA allegations of improper recruiting phone calls at Oklahoma. That ended with Sampson and the program being sanctioned by the NCAA.

There is precedent for coaches winning lawsuits in these types of cases.

Former Ohio State coach Jim O'Brien was fired in June 2004 after giving a Serbian recruit a $6,000 loan in 1999 to help cover the family's medical expenses. O'Brien later won a suit for wrongful termination against the university and was awarded $2.2 million plus interest. Ohio State has appealed the decision to Ohio's Supreme Court.

Indiana would certainly prefer avoiding an expensive lawsuit.

Until the university decides what to do, though, the Sampson debate will rage among fans and supports.

McNamee's lawyer predicts Clemens pardon

One of Brian McNamee's lawyers predicted Roger Clemens will be pardoned by President Bush, saying some Republicans treated his client harshly because of the pitcher's friendship with the Bush family.

Richard Emery made the claims Thursday, a day after a congressional hearing broke down along party lines. Many Democrats were skeptical of Clemens' denials he used performance-enhancing drugs and Republicans questioned the character of McNamee, the personal trainer who made the accusations against the seven-time Cy Young Award winner.

"It would be the easiest thing in the world for George W. Bush, given the corrupt proclivities of his administration, to say Roger Clemens is an American hero, Roger Clemens helped children," Emery said in a telephone interview. "It's my belief they have some reason to believe they can get a pardon."

During Wednesday's session before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Clemens repeated his denials under oath, which could lead to criminal charges if federal prosecutors conclude he made false statements or obstructed Congress.

"I'm not aware of Mr. Clemens having been charged with anything," White House deputy press secretary Tony Fratto said after being told of Emery's remarks.

Emery cited Bush's decision last year to commute the 2 1/2-year prison sentence of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, his vice president's former top aide. Libby was convicted in the case of the leaked identity of a CIA operative.

In addition, Emery said he thinks Bush would pardon Clemens even before an indictment or conviction, as President Ford did with President Nixon.

During the hearing, Clemens cited his friendship with Bush's father, President George H.W. Bush, a baseball fan who regularly attends Houston Astros' games. Clemens said he was on a recent hunting trip when the elder Bush called with words of support.

AP

Brian McNamee, former personal trainer to Roger Clemens, leaves after meeting with the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee on Capitol Hill in this Feb. 7, 2008 file photo in Washington

"When all this happened, the former president of the United States found me in a deer blind in south Texas and expressed his concerns that this was unbelievable, and stay strong and hold your head up high," Clemens testified.

Emery said as he thought about the testimony overnight, Clemens' reference to the call from the elder Bush convinced him the questioning by Republicans was a concerted effort.

"All the pieces fell into place given his friendship, his personal friendship with the Bush family," Emery said. "They have some belief that even if he's prosecuted, he will never have to serve jail time or face a trail. This is a charade we're going through."

IRS Special Agent Jeff Novitzky attended the hearing and watched from the second row. Novitzky has been a part of the BALCO prosecution team that secured an indictment against Barry Bonds on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice. Bonds testified before a grand jury in 2003 and denied that he knowingly used performance-enhancing drugs.

Emery praised Clemens' lawyers, Rusty Hardin and Lanny Breuer, as knowledgeable and said the prospect of a pardon was the only explanation that allowed the pitcher to repeat his denials under oath.

"It's the only reason lawyers worth their salt would allow their client to run into the buzz saw of Jeff Novitzky and the potential prosecution, tampering and lying to a federal official," Emery said.

Hardin dismissed Emery's theory as without merit.

"Richard Emery just has to quit smoking his own dope," Hardin said.

A spokesman for Rep. Darrell Issa of California, a Republican who was critical of McNamee during the hearing, said Wednesday's partisan tone came about because GOP members felt the hearing was overly focused on Clemens instead of the broader concerns raised in the Mitchell Report on drug use in baseball.

"It's clear Democrats had expected a government-funded TV show trial, and now they're whining that Republicans didn't want to play," said the spokesman, Frederick Hill. "The hearing was supposed to be about the Mitchell Report. The Democrats are at fault for focusing on individual wrongdoing instead of the validity of the Mitchell Report."

Emery had harsh criticism for Republican Reps. Dan Burton of Indiana, Virginia Foxx of North Carolina, Christopher Shays of Connecticut and Issa. Shays called McNamee a "drug dealer" and Burton accused McNamee of telling "lie after lie after lie after lie."

"It was disgusting and despicable behavior," Emery said. "It was clear to me they were carrying someone's water."

Rep. Elijah Cummings, a Maryland Democrat who said he believed McNamee, was concerned about the apparent Republican-Democratic divide.

"Of all the things to become partisan over, this was the wrong one," Cummings said. "What we needed to be doing was to be in search of truth. And I think that when you are truly in search of truth, we need to put the partisan shoes at the door and walk in without them." ***(AP)***

Mussina hopes Pettitte can handle media

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—When Andy Pettitte arrives at New York Yankees' training camp he will face intense media scrutiny.

Teammate Mike Mussina hopes Pettitte is up to the challenge of answering all the questions about Roger Clemens and human growth hormone.

"You know, this is a different animal than anything that he's had to deal with before," Mussina said Thursday, when pitchers and catchers reported for spring training. "Do I think he can deal with it? Sure I think he can deal with it. But until you actually are put in the situation and have to deal with it, you really, really don't know. We'll just have to move forward and see how it plays out."

On Wednesday, Pettitte's sworn deposition and affidavit was made public during the congressional hearings on the Mitchell Report. In his testimony, Pettitte told congressional lawyers that Clemens informed him nearly a decade ago he had used human growth hormone. Pettitte also admitted his own use of HGH was not limited to 2002, as he previously said, but that he also took injections in 2004 after obtaining the substance from his ailing father.

He was given until Monday to report to the Yankees' complex in Tampa—the media's first chance to question the left-hander.

Mussina hopes Pettitte addresses the issue quickly and any controversy dissipates.

"Lay it out there in one or two sessions and then hopefully it eases a little from there," Mussina said. "I don't think he's going to be able to do his job properly if he has to answer questions about it all season long.

"Hopefully, he can find a way to fight through it and perform well. We're expecting Andy to go out there and pitch 190 or 200 innings, and win 15 games or so. The question is, can he deal with all this and focus on pitching at the same time?"

Pettitte's teammates were supportive.

"He's going to handle it professionally," Joba Chamberlain said. "He's going to come and do what got him to this point, and that's perform on the field. When he gets between the lines, it's not going to stop him. I'm looking forward to seeing him and giving him a hug, and say, 'Welcome back.'"

Right-hander Phil Hughes agreed.

"It's hard enough to play this game when you're focused on playing it," Hughes said. "There are so many other things that are going on in his head. I know it will be tough, but I feel I know Andy well enough that it's probably not going to bother him too much."

Mussina, a 250-game winner during a major league career that began in 1991, never considered using performance-enhancing substances. He takes pride at his performance during the Steroids Era.

"I feel better about myself because I competed against them and I succeeded," Mussina said.

Typo spurs erroneous Bonds drug reports

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A typo in court papers regarding Barry Bonds filed late Thursday by federal prosecutors touched off a brief tempest over the mistaken belief that he failed a drug test in November 2001, one month after breaking the home run record.

In fact, the government meant to reference a previously reported November 2000 failed drug test, U.S. attorney spokesman Josh Eaton said. That drug test was included in the indictment unsealed last year, when prosecutors said the test was for a player they called "Barry B."

The mistake prompted at least one erroneous report that was quickly posted to Web sites around the country.

The filing amounted to federal prosecutors defending their questioning of Bonds before a grand jury, and urging a judge to keep the slugger's perjury prosecution on track.

Bonds had argued that the questions posed to him by prosecutors were ambiguous and confusing. He demanded that the five-count indictment charging him with lying to a grand jury be tossed out. Bonds has pleaded not guilty.

In the filing, prosecutors said Bonds was specifically told before he began testifying in 2003 that he could consult with his lawyers or ask for a question rephrased if he ever got confused.

"Bonds never said he was confused or asked the prosecutor to rephrase a question," the government's filing stated.

Instead, they said their questions left no doubt that they were asking Bonds about his drug use and his relationship with personal trainer Greg Anderson.

Prosecutors said "as the evidence at trial will show, each count charges that Bonds repeatedly lied in answering the same question or questions on the same subject matter."

The matter will be the subject of a court hearing Feb. 29.

In a related proceeding, Anderson and BALCO founder Victor Conte are expected in court Friday for a hearing on whether they can keep all the evidence prosecutors turned over to them from the government's investigation of steroids in sports. Federal prosecutors want the two convicted steroids dealers to return the documents.

NFL challenges Vick bonus ruling

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The NFL is asking federal court to vacate a judge's ruling allowing suspended quarterback Michael Vick to keep $16.5 million in bonuses.

The NFL also wants to end the jurisdiction of U.S. District Judge David Doty over labor matters.

Doty ruled earlier this month that the Atlanta Falcons would violate the NFL collective bargaining agreement if they tried to recover the roster bonus Vick already received. The league argues that Doty's public comments show he is biased against them.

Vick is serving a 23-month prison sentence after pleading guilty to federal charges in a dogfighting operation. After the plea, the Falcons tried to recover about $20 million in bonuses Vick earned from 2004 to 2007.

"Michael Vick breached his contract and cannot play because he was convicted of a felony and is sitting in jail," the NFL said in a statement. "Despite those facts, the judge held that Vick is entitled to keep nearly $20 million in bonus money paid to him for playing football through the 2014 season."

The league also questioned whether Doty, who presided during the 1992 antitrust suit that led to the 1993 labor agreement after six years without a contract, should continue to oversee its dealings with the NFL Players Association.

"No other industry has its labor relations supervised by a federal judge in the way we do, and at this point, after 15 years of labor peace, it is hard to understand why such oversight is necessary or (why it is) an appropriate use of judicial resources," the statement said.

Choi holds lead at Northern Trust Open

LOS ANGELES (AP)—K.J. Choi has won tournaments hosted by Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods over the last nine months during a steady climb into the top 10 in the world. Further proof of his staying power came Thursday on a cool, windy morning at Riviera.

He managed to take the early lead at Hogan's Alley.

On a course that has given him fits, Choi played bogey-free in breezy conditions for a 6-under 65 and a one-shot lead over Kevin Na in the Northern Trust Open.

"This course, I've always had trouble putting and my iron shots have always been a problem," Choi said. "But I felt like they were working today, and I think even the weather was pretty pleasant when I played. So it all worked out good."

It didn't work out so well for the late starters, who faced a strong wind that could be heard as much as it was felt, rattling the pins on every green and making it tough to get it close to the hole, especially as the sun and temperatures dropped late in the afternoon.

Seventeen players failed to finish the round before dark.

Chad Campbell and Vaughn Taylor were at 67. Phil Mickelson took a 30-minute commute by plane from his home north of San Diego and opened with a 68, dropping a shot on his final hole when his drive found the bunker and left him unable to reach the green.

Among those who failed to finish was Dustin Johnson, the best among rookies in the first two months. He was at 3 under and had a birdie putt on the 16th, and his bogey-free day included a most unlikely par. After driving over the green on the par-4 10th, he played off the sandy path, over a TV tower and just short, dropping into a bunker. He left his third shot in the bunker.

"I told my caddie, 'This one should be easier,'" Johnson said.

He holed it for par.

Those scores were hard to find late in the day, when the wind shifted directions. Geoff Ogilvy played into the wind through the fifth hole, which heads toward the ocean, then found the wind in his face 20 minutes later as he stood on the seventh tee.

"Not possible," he said after a hard-earned 69. "The whole front nine felt into the wind."

Sergio Garcia, among several international players making their '08 debut on the PGA Tour, opened with a 74. Adam Scott shot 73, while Retief Goosen shot 42 on the front on his way to a 79.

Riviera, where Ben Hogan won the Los Angeles Open and the U.S. Open in 1948, is firm and fast this year with recent dry weather, and it showed on some of the greens, where the ball sprung forward upon landing and made it tough to get close to the pin.

K.J. Choi, of South Korea, watches his drive on the second tee in the first round of the Northern Trust Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles on Thursday, Feb. 14, 2008.

AP

Choi usually struggles at Riviera in any conditions. He has played the last seven years and finished in the top 20 only once, in 2003 when he tied for fifth. But he worked on his game last week instead of playing Pebble Beach, and while he was still confused over the breaks on various putts, his final assessment would have made Yogi Berra proud.

"Shooting 6 under, you can't be sad about that, so I'm very happy," he said.

John Daly was atop the leaderboard at times during the morning and finished with a 69, which might have been better had he not taken a tour of the barranca that divides the eighth fairway. But for a guy whose season is defined by initials - one MDF, one WD, two MCs—he had few complaints.

"It's nice to finally get off to a decent start," he said.

Daly's only paycheck this year came at the Sony Open, where he was among 18 players who technically made the cut but was not allowed to finish (also known as MDF). He withdrew from the Bob Hope Classic and missed the cut at Torrey Pines and Pebble Beach. This was only the second time in 11 rounds this year that he broke 70.

Mickelson didn't mind his start either, even if it ended badly.

Los Angeles is the only city on the West Coast Swing were Lefty has never won, although he came close last year. Needing a par on the last hole to win, he hit a poor chip and made bogey, then lost to Charles Howell III in a playoff.

Putting hurt him at Pebble Beach, along with that 11 on the 14th hole that sent him home early, although Mickelson said he wasn't overly concerned, and that showed in the first round at Riviera.

"If I can putt like that, I should have a good chance on the weekend," he said. "If

"Today, it was close," he said of his game. "The putter felt good. If I can putt like that, I should have a good chance on the weekend. And if I start to eliminate a couple of misses like that drive on No. 9, hitting in the bunker and stuff like that, I should be able to put together some good rounds. I'm looking forward to the next three days."

Ditto for Na, who grew up in Southern California and already has two top 5s this year, playing in the final group at the Sony Open and with Mickelson in the FBR Open two weeks ago. His only problem seems to be with his eyesight. Na said his laser surgery didn't go well, and last week his doctor told him to wear contacts.

"Last week was the first week I was able to see somewhat decent," he said. "I can see really well, and I'm excited about it."

Kidd-to-Mavs? It's up to Devean George

DALLAS (AP)—Devean George won three rings playing alongside Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant. He joined the Dallas Mavericks before last season thinking he might add to his collection playing alongside Dirk Nowitzki.

Now the Mavs have a chance to get Jason Kidd, too. George might be pretty excited—if he wasn't among the players being offered for the superstar point guard.

But George doesn't want to go, and he doesn't have to because of a virtual no-trade clause known as "early Bird rights."

So, for now at least, the deal is off.

"I've got to do what's best for me," George said late Wednesday, after going 0-for-11 with zero points in 33 minutes of Dallas' 96-76 victory over Portland. "My agent wants me to wait until he can talk to me and explain what the risks are ... instead of just jumping the gun."

His agent, Mark Bartelstein, said: "We're not trying to hold things up or be difficult, but just like teams make tough decisions all the time—about cutting players or making trades—they do what's best for their team, and it's my obligation to do what's best for Devean. You don't want to stop teams from doing their business, but we don't feel like it makes sense at this time."

Whether this is a setback or a deal-breaker will be determined in the coming days. The trade deadline is next Thursday.

The deal was supposed to be George, emerging point guard Devin Harris, veteran Jerry Stackhouse and reserves DeSagana Diop and Maurice Ager going to New Jersey and Kidd, Malik Allen and Antoine Wright going to Dallas, according to a league source who spoke on condition of anonymity because it wasn't finalized.

Stackhouse said he's only part of the trade "to make the numbers work." He indicated the Nets would buy out his contract, enabling him to re-sign with Dallas in a month.

"Getting bought out, if that happens, my first choice would be to come back to Dallas. I'm settled in, just bought a house," he said.

George's "early Bird rights," which come from being on his second one-year deal, mainly give him a chance to sign his next contract for more than the salary cap allows. However, he's unlikely to command that much anyway. Another benefit is the veto power that's also part of those rights, as per the NBA's collective bargaining agreement.

Thus, while Kidd is the centerpiece of the deal, George is the linchpin.

Word that George blocked the trade apparently spread throughout the arena Wednesday night because George said he heard fans hollering things like, "C'mon, what are you doing?" and, "Stop it, you're holding things up." Other lines included, "Quit being selfish," and "We want Kidd."

"All the finger-pointing is at me," he said. "I'm the bad guy. I'll take that."

Judging by homemade signs at Wednesday night's game in Dallas, fans were against the deal. One wrote "No Trade, No Kidding," and a section over, there were signs saying "Keep Harris," with a heart dotting the i; another read, "Stop KIDD'n around Cuban!" with faces of three players Dallas would deal below it. Under one basket, though, a poster read, "Welcome Back Kidd."

Kidd, Allen and Wright were inactive for New Jersey. George and Diop played, while Harris, Stackhouse and Ager were inactive; Harris and Stackhouse are hurt and Ager is in the NBDL.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank talked about life without his All-Star point guard prior to his team's 109-91 loss in Toronto.

"I love him. He's a very special person, but it's time for both him and the organization to part ways," Frank said. "We're giving up a Hall of Fame point guard and some good role players. If this deal goes through, we'll be receiving some very good players as well and a new era of Nets basketball will start because Jason is that significant a player."

A move for Kidd is an indication the Mavs are in a win-now mode. He is 10 years older than the 24-year-old Harris. Dallas has been close in recent years, losing in the NBA finals in 2006, then winning 67 games last season before flaming out in the first round.

"He would bring great leadership," Mavericks guard Jason Terry said. "He's a Hall of Fame point guard who knows how to win and how to lead. He's played in the Finals. He's a guy we could learn from. If it happens, it would be great for the organization."

Mavs officials have been reluctant to shake up their roster, but a recent slump and the moves by conference rivals may have helped change their minds. The Lakers got things going by plucking Pau Gasol from Memphis, then last week Phoenix traded for Shaquille O'Neal. San Antonio also has added point guard Damon Stoudamire to its rotation.

"It's been kind of stagnant all season," Stackhouse said. "I think you just try to find the right piece. Maybe this is the right piece that really helps our team, that gets our scorers easy opportunities. Getting Pau or Shaq wouldn't have helped that case. Getting a point guard, that gets you easy opportunities. It solves that issue for us."

Kidd broke into the league in 1994-95 when Dallas made him the third overall pick. He was voted co-Rookie of the Year, but the club was such a mess it was better known as the Mav-wrecks.

He went to New Jersey from Phoenix before the 2001-02 season, then led the Nets to the NBA finals in each of his first two seasons. But they haven't gotten past the second round of the playoffs since. With the club well under .500, he's been looking to get traded for months.

Although Kidd turns 35 on March 23, he's still among the league's best point guards. He's averaging 11.3 points, 10.4 assists and 8.1 rebounds.

Suns pull away in final quarter to beat weary Mavericks

PHOENIX (AP)—Steve Nash had 24 points and 13 assists as the Phoenix Suns pulled away in the final quarter to beat the weary and short-handed Dallas Mavericks 109-97 in the NBA on Thursday.

The Suns shot 57 percent and improved to 3-2 since Shawn Marion and Marcus Banks were sent to Miami in exchange for Shaquille O'Neal.

O'Neal, sidelined with a hip injury, is scheduled to make his Phoenix debut next Wednesday against his old team, the Los Angeles Lakers.

Victory moved Phoenix 1-1/2 games clear of the Lakers in the Pacific Division.

The Mavericks were without Josh Howard, Jerry Stackhouse and Devin Harris because of injuries.

Dallas was playing its fourth game in five nights but stayed close until the Suns put it away with an 11-2 run late in the final quarter.

Bulls 99, Heat 92

In Chicago, Miami lost to Chicago and fell to its 24th loss in 25 games, despite solid outings by Dwyane Wade and Shawn Marion.

Kirk Hinrich scored 24 points to lead the Bulls.

Wade scored 30 points and Marion had 23 in his third game with Miami since the O'Neal deal. But it wasn't enough to prevent the Heat from dropping their ninth straight.

Chicago is struggling with a 21-32 record, but is only 1-1/2 games off the Eastern Conference's last playoff spot.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	9	.820	_
Toronto	28	23	.549	13 1/2
New Jersey	23	30	.434	19 1/2
Philadelphia	23	30	.434	19 1/2
New York	15	37	.288	27

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	21	.611	_
Washington	25	27	.481	7
Atlanta	21	28	.429	9 1/2
Charlotte	19	34	.358	13 1/2
Miami	9	42	.176	22 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	39	13	.750	_
Cleveland	29	23	.558	10
Chicago	21	31	.404	18
Indiana	21	32	.396	18 1/2
Milwaukee	19	34	.358	20 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	36	15	.706	_
San Antonio	34	17	.667	2
Dallas	35	18	.660	2
Houston	32	20	.615	4 1/2
Memphis	14	38	.269	22 1/2

Northwest Division

Utah	34	19	.642	_
Denver	32	20	.615	1 1/2
Portland	28	24	.538	5 1/2
Seattle	13	38	.255	20
Minnesota	10	41	.196	23

Pacific Division

Phoenix	37	16	.698	_
L.A. Lakers	35	17	.673	1 1/2
Golden State	32	20	.615	4 1/2
Sacramento	23	28	.451	13
L.A. Clippers	17	33	.340	18 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Chicago 99, Miami 92
Phoenix 109, Dallas 97

NORTHERN TRUST OPEN SCORES

FIRST ROUND
(Round suspended due to darkness with 17 players to finish Friday)

K.J. Choi	31-34	65
Kevin Na	30-36	66
Chad Campbell	35-32	67
Vaughn Taylor	33-34	67
Alex Cejka	35-33	68
Phil Mickelson	34-34	68
Hunter Mahan	33-35	68
Luke Donald	33-35	68
John Rollins	30-38	68
Scott Verplank	35-33	68
Angel Cabrera	37-31	68
Billy Mayfair	34-34	68
Peter Lonard	35-34	69
John Daly	35-34	69
Stuart Appleby	33-36	69
Padraig Harrington	35-34	69
Steve Marino	34-35	69
Jeff Quinney	33-36	69
Pat Perez	35-34	69
Craig Barlow	34-35	69
Tim Clark	34-35	69
Geoff Ogilvy	33-36	69
Robert Allenby	36-34	70
Mark Wilson	34-36	70
Ben Curtis	35-35	70
Brian Bateman	33-37	70
Charlie Wi	34-36	70
Cody Freeman	34-36	70
Ken Duke	34-36	70
D.J. Trahan	35-35	70
Carl Pettersson	36-34	70
Ben Crane	35-35	70
Joe Ogilvie	34-36	70
Fred Couples	34-36	70
Briny Baird	35-36	71
Brandt Jobe	33-38	71
Bubba Watson	35-36	71
Steve Flesch	36-35	71
Dean Wilson	34-37	71
Steve Stricker	35-36	71
Eric Axley	33-38	71
Charles Howell III	34-37	71
Joe Durant	36-35	71
Will MacKenzie	35-36	71
Jason Gore	37-34	71
Bo Van Pelt	35-36	71
John Merrick	35-36	71
Shigeki Maruyama	34-37	71
Charles Warren	35-36	71
Vijay Singh	34-37	71
Jeff Maggert	33-38	71
David Toms	33-38	71
Jerry Kelly	35-37	72
Scott McCarron	34-38	72
Nathan Green	35-37	72
Ryan Moore	35-37	72
Bill Haas	35-37	72
Rory Sabbatini	35-37	72
George McNeill	36-36	72
Zach Johnson	36-36	72
Lucas Glover	36-36	72
Fredrik Jacobson	35-37	72
Toru Taniguchi	35-37	72
Tom Pernice, Jr.	33-39	72
Brad Adamonis	35-37	72
Billy Andrade	37-35	72
Y.E. Yang	36-36	72
Justin Rose	34-38	72
Kenny Perry	36-36	72
Trevor Immelman	36-36	72
Chris DiMarco	35-37	72
Matt Kuchar	36-37	73
Rod Pampling	35-38	73
Heath Slocum	36-37	73
Anthony Kim	37-36	73
Andres Romero	34-39	73
Tim Petrovic	34-39	73
Steve Elkington	38-35	73
Mathew Goggin	39-34	73
Adam Scott	36-37	73
Mike Weir	37-36	73
Aaron Baddeley	37-36	73
Daniel Chopra	36-37	73
Paul Casey	37-36	73
Brett Quigley	37-37	74
Bart Bryant	36-38	74
Olin Browne	36-38	74
J.B. Holmes	37-37	74
Fred Funk	35-39	74
Cameron Beckman	35-39	74
Jeff Overton	36-38	74
Mark Hensby	32-42	74
Bob Estes	37-37	74
Cliff Kresge	37-37	74
Troy Matteson	34-40	74
Sergio Garcia	36-38	74
Lee Westwood	37-37	74
Johnson Wagner	38-37	75
Rich Beem	37-38	75
Shane Bertsch	37-38	75
Rocco Mediate	39-36	75
Marc Turnesa	39-36	75
Nicholas Thompson	38-37	75
Tag Ridings	40-35	75
Jason Bohn	36-39	75
Tom Lehman	37-38	75
Nick Watney	35-40	75
Davis Love III	38-37	75
Corey Pavin	35-40	75
Ryan Armour	36-39	75
Jay Williamson	37-38	75
Brandt Snedeker	36-40	76
Shaun Micheel	38-38	76
Jim Furyk	38-38	76
J.J. Henry	39-37	76
Todd Hamilton	40-37	77
Charley Hoffman	34-43	77
Robert Floyd	37-40	77
Len Mattiace	38-39	77
Shingo Katayama	39-38	77
John Mallinger	40-38	78
J.L. Lewis	39-40	79
J.P. Hayes	40-39	79
Retief Goosen	37-42	79
Steve Lowery	38-41	79

LEADERBOARD

SCORE		THRU
1. K.J. Choi	-6	F
2. Kevin Na	-5	F
3. Chad Campbell	-4	F
3. Vaughn Taylor	-4	F
5. Alex Cejka	-3	F
5. Phil Mickelson	-3	F
5. Hunter Mahan	-3	F
5. Luke Donald	-3	F
5. John Rollins	-3	F
5. Scott Verplank	-3	F
5. Angel Cabrera	-3	F
5. Billy Mayfair	-3	F
5. Dustin Johnson	-3	15

NMIFA youth league opens today

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Club action in the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association youth league opens today with four clubs fielding a total of 22 teams that will compete in various home fields on the island.

The four clubs are composed of Mantanza (Northern Saipan), MP United (Central Saipan), Parie (East Saipan and San Vicente area), and Independents (South Saipan and Koblerville area).

MP United Blue will host Parie I at Garapan Elementary School while MP United White hosts the Independents Koblerville Elementary School field.

The Under-6 and -10 games begin at 2pm while matches in Under-8 and -12 are scheduled at 3pm

Mantanza then hosts Independents II in the Under-10 division at Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School at 2pm and an Under-8 and –12 matches at 3pm. Mantanza's Under-6 team will have a bye.

The Under-15 games will take place on Feb. 23, Saturday. NMIFA youth league chair Sue Knecht said registration for this age group is still ongoing and sign up is open to kids who were born between 1993 and 1995.

Applications can be picked up at the NMIFA office in San Jose at the Marianas Visitors Authority building. Once completed, applications can be dropped off at the NMIFA office from 12:30pm to 3:30pm from Monday to Friday.

Knecht said all four clubs are newly created and will eventually become NMIFA affiliated members. "Club Ownership is another step towards becoming more in line with other nations around Asia who are members of the Asian Football Conference.

Knecht said the NMIFA board, led by president Jerry Tan, had been working hard to lead the organization in the direction of AFC membership. "Club structure will be a key step to head the organization in the right direction."

The area under the Independent Football Club or the Southern Saipan Club is Oleai, San Antonio, Koblerville, and Lower Dan Dan.

Northern Saipan and parts of Capital Hill will be under Matanza FC while Garapan, Navy Hill and Central Saipan area will be under MP United.

Parie FC will have is Eastern and backside of Saipan, which includes Kagman, San Vicente, and upper Dan Dan.

For more information, call the NMIFA office at 235-0173.

Fil-Taga December Ace this Sunday

Fil-Taga Golfers Association will hold its February Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, Feb. 17, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort east course.

According to tournament director Jhun Calma, show time is set at 11:30am with tee-off time scheduled 30 minutes later at 12pm.

Fil-Taga's 2007 officers are led by president Jun Dela Cruz Jr., vice-president Jhun Calma, secretary Manny Po, and treasurer Mardo Guban.

Its board of directors is made up of Fr. Manny Corcuera, Miguel Cruz, Jr., Ted Malaran, Gil Faller, Rey Ferraz, Greg De Torres, Rene Batallones, Nestor Siruelo, and George Sablan

Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights.

A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the $35 to $40 price range for most tournaments. ***(Mark Rabago)***

SGA February Ace this Sunday

The Saipan Golf Association will hold its February Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, Feb. 16, at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

Check-in time for the club's first monthly competition of the year is 11am with tee time set an hour and a half later at 12:30pm. Slots will be available for the first 24 entrants.

After the round, president Martin Sablan will hold an organization meeting.

Anyone interested in joining SGA or need more information about the club, should contact Joe Sablan, Larry Guerrero, and Ben Aldan at 287-4563, 287-1052, or 234-3176, respectively. ***(Mark Rabago)***

ALEGRE

From Page 28

Sadly, it was not. We will surely miss him."

Rangamar said Alegre was a very good basketball player and he always loved to play against him. "He has the knowledge of the game. He has the same style as me, he knows how to play the mind game and create situations on the court."

He said that Alegre was his former teammate during Ol'Aces' early championship years. "As a player during his early years, [Alegre] brought fear to any opponent, including myself. He could steal the ball from any player back in the days. And he has led many teams to championships both in BANMI and local Filipino leagues."

Rangamar said he and Alegre play the same position with passion and always had their best games playing against each other. "There were games when we'd be poking fun at each and there were also games were we wanted to tear each other's face off. But at the end of the game, we had no problem sharing some laughs and a few beers together."

Rangamar said he wanted to remember Alegre as a fierce competitor inside the court but a good friend after the games. "He shows genuine concern about people's personal life. He is one of the few Filipino players that played for both the local BANMI leagues and Filipino leagues with no fear."

He added Alegre broke the barrier of fear by Filipino players playing against locals. "A lot of our Filipino brothers were intimidated playing in the BANMI leagues. [He] opened the doors for Filipinos not to fear playing against [locals]. Filipinos seeing [Alegre] play and win championships in the BANMI league has inspired a lot of them to do the same."

Rangamar said he and Alegre share the vision of seeing everyone being able to play in any league and not be restricted because of ethnicity. He said BANMI is extending their condolences to Alegre's family and friends.

Aguon had the privilege of coaching Alegre from 1996 up to their last championship win with Rock Steady in the BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League.

"I've known him since 1996. I even played against him during pickup games. I respect his love of the game, camaraderie, and friendship. He will be missed by our local basketball [community]. My deepest condolences to the family," Aguon said.

Ed Diaz and James Lee, who were Alegre's former teammates in different squads, were shocked and could not believe what happened to the multi-awarded cager.

"When I found out about it [Alegre's death] it took a few moments to really sink in. I [then] called up Edsel Mendoza to confirm it and he told me that it was true," said Diaz, who was Alegre's former teammate in the CNMI National team.

Diaz said the CNMI basketball community has lost one great player and he will always be remembered. "He will always be in my prayers. I feel so sad and emotional about it because at one point we were rivals on the court."

"We played against each other when I was still young. He was always a very challenging person and very hard to defend, very smart, fast, and smooth with his style. Even though he is short he'll still strip the ball from taller players."

Diaz said playing with Alegre was one of the best things that happened to him in the local basketball scene. "The guy knew what he was doing and [knew] how to strengthen the team. It was really nice playing with him since he knew how to take charge and was a leader inside the court."

Lee said he has learned a lot of things about basketball while playing with and against Alegre. "Rick was a great teammate, mentor, and especially a friend. I have played against him and with him on the court and have learned so much from him."

He said the basketball community is not the only one that will miss Alegre. "His passing is an enormous loss, not only to the basketball community but also to everyone that have known him. He will be dearly missed. My condolences to his family."

Arnold Mesa, who officiated games with Alegre in the high school league, said it would be hard to replace him as a player and a referee. "He was my partner for a number of games. As an official, he is very enthusiastic and a good referee. It is really sad to lose him."

Mesa recalled seeing Alegre play when he arrived on Saipan in 2000. "He is a complete player. He is not really a scorer but he is a kind of player that would figure out ways on how to win a game."

"He also uses players that fit his transition game. He is one of the best point guards on Saipan," ended Mesa, who even gave Alegre the nickname "Champ" after he has already won numerous championship titles in various basketball leagues.

UNDER-18

From Page 28

when a new date has been chosen. Probably in April."

The event was scheduled today at Managaha Island and is part of the Marianas Cup, which will be held from Feb. 22 to 24 at the Pacific Islands Club sand courts.

The 14-and-under tournament will be a four-person event, while the Under-17 division is a two-person match.

The adult division of the Marianas Cup will have exhibition games in two-person matches in the men's and women's divisions, the professionals will also hold clinics during the three-day Marianas Cup.

More than 90 players from Hawaii, California, Japan, Guam, Korea, Italy, Russia, and the CNMI have already participated in the Marianas Cup in the last three years.

The event is approved by the FIVB and USA Volleyball and is listed in the FIVB website as a country-against-country tournament.

For more information about the Marianas Cup, call Cramer 234-7976 or email him at seaexec@picsaipan.com.

BING

From Page 28

day and Monday.

Sunday's roll-off would begin as early as 3:30pm, while Monday's competition, starts at 6:30pm. Registration starts 30 minutes prior to game time. Awarding ceremonies immediately follow the end of competition on Monday.

The competition is exclusive for SBA members with participants limited to the first 72 entries for each day.

Members have the option to bowl on the Sunday or Monday, or on both days, provided that the $15 entry fee is paid. Bowlers who did not bowl on Sunday will be given priority for the Monday shift. Only the higher score will count for the tournament. All participants have to pay the $15 SBA annual membership fee.

The champion is guaranteed $100 in prize money but it could go up to as much $150 depending on the number of participants. Women participants will only have separate prizes if there are at least 10 entries.

Youth bowlers (12 to 19 years old, not bowling in any leagues or averaging less than 160 in any league) will only bowl on Sunday for the Bing Energy Drink Prince and Princess of the Lanes. Entry fee is $10.

After being sponsor-less for the whole of 2007, the Saipan Bowling Association's monthly King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament as well as its season-ending bowlfest has secured the help of MARPAC for this year's competition.

The Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tournament aims to crown 12 monthly champions through the course of the year.

For early registration and payment for the February tournaments, see or contact Gigi Zapanta at 288-5627or e-mail zapanta@pticom.com.

Choi holds lead at Northern Trust Open

K.J. Choi has won tournaments hosted by Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods over the last nine months during a steady climb into the top 10 in the world. **26**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Indiana in bind over basketball coach

Getting rid of coach Kelvin Sampson might not be the solution to Indiana's problems. It's a move that might just create a bigger mess. **24**

Tagaman champ Dibens withdraws

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tagaman Triathlon defending champion Julie Dibens has withdrawn from this year's staging of the region's oldest multi-sport race as well as the 6th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship.

It was earlier reported that Dibens was coming back for the 19th Tagaman Triathlon, but race director Bill Sakovich in an email Thursday said that the 2007 XTERRA World Championship winner will not be coming to Saipan this March because she is under the weather.

"Julie has been sick and not training," said Sakovich.

Dibbens was first woman to cross the finish line in last year's Tagaman, tearing the tape in a time of 3:04:07.

The 19th Tagaman Triathlon will be held on March 15, 2008. The 2-kilometer swim, 60-kim bike, and 15-km run Tagaman begins at Pacific Islands Club and traverses the entire 15-mile length of the island.

The Tagaman is part of the annual Saipan Sportsfest and is a held a week after the 7th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship on March 8, 2008

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Tagaman triathlon defending champion Julie Dibens, right, is shown here in this file photo from the bike transition of last year's 18th Tagaman Triathlon.

Aside form the Tagaman and XTERRA, the 2008 Saipan Sportfest will also feature the annual Sophia Walk, an XTERRA bike race, and Taga Kids.

For more information about the 19th Tagaman Triathlon, contact the Marianas Visitors Authority at 664-3200/01. Both the MVA and Taga Inc. are organizing this year's Saipan Sportsfest.

Born in Salisbury, England in March 4, 1975, Dibens started her sporting career in swimming, competing for Great Britain as a junior in 1991. She then received a swimming scholarship for Louisiana State University where she obtained All American honors.

B.S. of Kinesiology and M.S. Exercise Physiology graduate began training for triathlon after her studies and has since never looked back. Among her achievements in triathlon are: 1998 World Champion (amateur female); 1998Great Britain Amateur of the Year; 1999 USTS Series Champion; 2000 European Championship bronze medalist; eighth in the 2004 World Championships; 30th in the 2004 Summer Olympics; 2007 British National Champion; 2007 UK XTERRA Champion; 2007St. Croix 70.3 Champion; 2007 UK 70.3 Champion, and 2007 XTERRA World Champion.

Dibens also qualified for both the 2000 and 2004 Olympics. However, she was forced to withdraw from the 2000 Games because of a knee injury.

Alegre's death shocks CNMI basketball community

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The CNMI basketball community was saddened and shocked by the sudden death of veteran cager Ric Alegre, who died Wednesday night during a timeout in a game in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Alegre, who is considered the heart-and-soul of every team that he played with, died from a possible heart attack while playing for Aqua Resort Club.

Alegre's former teammates, coach, and partner in the referees association remember him as a very competitive and athletic person. Aside from being a player Alegre, who is a former CNMI National team member, also coached teams to numerous titles and officiated games in the youth leagues.

Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands president Elias Rangamar said once he heard the sad news, he talked to CNMI Men's National Team coach and BANMI referees director Rufino Aguon.

"It is with sorrow and displeasure that a longtime friend, teammate, and member of the CNMI National Team passed away [on Wednesday]. Our sympathy and prayers go out to [his] family and friends."

Rangamar said at first he could not believe what he heard. "We wanted the news to be a rumor.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE
Ric Alegre poses with the championship trophy and his teammates' individual trophies in this file photo after leading Samahang Ilocano at Pangasinense to the 2006 title in the UFO Inter-color Basketball League.

Under-18 division of Marianas Cup postponed

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Lack of teams participating in the Under-14 and Under-17 divisions of the 16th Marianas Cup Beach Volleyball Festival has forced the postponement of the youth beach volleyball event today.

Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Jon Cramer said there were only two teams that joined the 14-and-under division, while three in the men's and two women's squads signed up for the Under-17.

"Sorry to say [the youth beach volleyball tournament] is postponed due to lack of teams. Thank you for putting in your teams."

Cramer said they would reschedule the youth tournament at a later date. "We will try to do it in another weekend soon. We will let you know

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Bing Energy Drink will sponsor youth tournament

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Saipan Bowling Association's monthly tournament for youth keglers will now be known as Bing Energy Drink Prince and Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament.

This after MARPAC agreed to also bankroll the competition, a little more than a month after the distributor acquiesced to sponsoring the King and Queen of the Lanes, since remained Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament.

The February Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes as well as the February Bing Energy Drink Prince and Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament resumes starting tomorrow at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.

The two-day Budweiser February King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament will be held in Feb. 17 and 18, Sun-

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